Concept of Muslim Culture in Iqbal

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PREFACE

This book is mainly based on the lectures of Iqbāl which have been collected and published under the title, "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam". In the fifth and sixth chapters of this book, Iqbāl has dealt with various aspects of Muslim culture; for example, its anti-classical spirit, its principle of movement (Ijtihād) and the rise and growth of Sufism. But the remarks made by Iqbāl on these topics are very brief. In the present book, the author has tried to develop and elaborate some of these remarks. For example, on the subject of Ijtihād a critical scrutiny has been undertaken of the early developments in Fiqh which is designed to show how Ijtihād was exercised by our early jurists and what factors led to the formalisation of the process of Ijtihād.

In the next chapter an attempt has been made to show how the process of Islamic legislation will work in modern times, a matter which Iqbāl was deelpy concerned. Similarly, in dealing with the anti-classical spirit of the Qur'ān which Iqbāl has emphasised, the author has briefly discussed the whole development of classical thought in its relation to the teachings of the Qur'ān. Thus the present book can best be described as a commentary on Iqbāl.

It is hoped that lovers of Iqbāl will appreciate the ideas put forward by the author in the context of Iqbāl's philosophy. How far Iqbāl himself would have agreed with the author's ideas, if he had been alive, it is difficult to say, but judging from the spirit of his philosophy, the author feels confident that he has done his best in elaborating some of the important remarks of Iqbāl in regard to the spirit of Muslim culture.

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CHAPTER I

ANTI-CLASSICISM OF THE QUR'ĀN

In his fifth lecture in 'the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam', Iqbāl starts with emphasising the difference between the prophetic and mystic types of consciousness, and says that the Prophet's return from the depths of his religious experience is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history.[1] Iqbāl then goes on to stress the concept of the finality of prophethood in Islam. "During the minority of mankind," Iqbāl declares, "psychic energy develops what I call prophetic consciousness, a mode of economizing individual thought and choice by providing ready made judgements, choices, and ways of action. With the birth of reason and critical faculty, however, life, in its own interest, inhibits the formation and growth of non-rational modes of consciousness. Inductive reason which alone makes man master of his environment, is an achievement; and when once born it must be reinforced by inhibiting the growth of other modes of knowledge."[2] The birth of Islam was, according to Iqbāl, the birth of inductive intellect. Having reached its perfection in Islam, prophecy discovered the need of its abolition. This is the meaning of the concept of the finality of prophethood in Islam.

After abolishing prophecy and non-rational modes of consciousness, the Qur'ān, adds Iqbāl, directed

man's attention to the three sources of knowledge which could enable him to master his fate. Nature, History and inner experience are the three sources of knowledge open to man, but it is in tapping the first two sources of knowledge, says Iqbāl, that the spirit of Islam is seen at its best.[3] The Qur'ān sees signs of the ultimate reality in the 'sun', the 'moon'......in fact in the whole of nature as revealed to the sense perception of man. This appeal to the concrete combined with the slow realization that, according to the teachings of the Qur'ān, the universe is dynamic in its origin, finite and capable of increase brought Muslim thinkers into conflict with Greek thought which, in the beginning of their career, they had studied with so much enthusiasm. Not realizing that the spirit of the Qur'ān is essentially anti-classical and putting full confidence in Greek thinkers, their first impulse was to understand the Qur'ān in the light of Greek philosophy. In view of the concrete spirit of the Qur'ān, and the speculative nature of Greek philosophy which enjoyed theory and was neglectful of fact, this attempt was foredoomed to failure. And it is what follows their failure that brings out the real spirit of the culture of Islam and lays the foundation of modern culture in some of its most important aspects.[4] To make his point clearer, Iqbāl claims that for purposes of knowledge, the spirit of Muslim culture fixes its gaze on the concrete, the finite, and that the birth of the method of observation and experiment in Islam was due not to a compromise with Greek thought but to a prolonged intellectual warfare with it.[5]

In order to better appreciate the remarks made by Iqbāl with regard to the revolutionary changes effected by Islam in man's life and his intellectual world view, it would be necessary to take stock of the world as it

existed before Islam and the religious and intellectual forces that went into its making. Let us begin with the Greeks on whom Iqbāl is so severe.

Ancient Philosophy and Religion

Greek philosophy developed to a very large extent in independence of the general social, political and religious life of the Greeks. On the whole, its effect was to create a tendency towards individualism and incline men to seek their salvation outside the life of the community. Its temperament was largely aristocratic. Before the rise of Greek philosophy, the religion of the Greeks was civic and political. Philosophic enlightenment brought about a decay in the old cults of Apollo, Zeus and Athene. Those who were touched by the philosophic spirit were soon disillusioned by the myths which held together the common people. The Sophists saw in the legal prescriptions of the state nothing but a body of customs and conventions established by human agreement. The natural appeared to be of greater worth more nearly permanent and binding than the social. Natural law seemed higher than historic positive law.[6] Ever since then, Nature, in some form or other, set the moral standard for the Greeks, and positive law and religion was largely abhorrent to them. Even a Jew, like St. Paul, came under the influence of the Greek ethical conceptions which almost deified nature. For example, when he spoke of the vile affections 'which were against nature' (Para Physin) he was still within the Jewish religious outlook. But when he emphasised the value of 'uncircumcision which is by nature' (ek physeos), he talked to the Greco-Roman gentiles in their language and not in that of the Jews. His argument recalls the insistence of Antiochus, reported by the equally Hellenistic Jewish author of

IV Maccabees, that Eleazer ate swine's flesh, 'for most excellent is the meat of this animal which Nature has graciously bestowed upon us and why should you abominate it'.[7]

The apotheosis of nature by the Greeks culminated in the identification of reason and nature by the Stoics, who avoided, however, the sharpened Cynic anti-thesis between civilization and nature. They rather referred what is contrary to nature to the preponderance of the individual impulse and characterised the natural as reason dwelling in each and all alike. The latter thought led to the conventional religious principle of subjection to world-reason.

Search for a New Ethics

The attempt to find ethical standards in nature failed, firstly because nature itself sets no standards, but largely because ethical standards cannot stand by themselves without the support of religion and religious metaphysics.

Ancient philosophy did not pass beyond a eudaemonistic conception of ethics.[8] Happiness remained the supreme goal of all ethical endeavour. Socrates believes that right action is a means for the attainment of happiness. In other words, ethics is justified because it leads to non-ethical satisfaction. Democritus held the principle that violent and stormy emotions disturb the equilibrium of the soul, i.e., disturb the fire-atoms. Such motions bring with them a state of agitation of the senses. Therefore, in spite of their apparently momentary pleasure, they lead in reality to lasting dissatisfaction. Fine and gentle motions of thought have, on the contrary, true pleasure in themselves.

The search for individual happiness and satisfaction was bound to result in the disregard for civic and social

virtues. Alike, therefore, in the Cynic, Cyrenaic and Stoic philosophies, we find a studied indifference to social and communal well-being. "Most dubious of all this was the shamelessness of which the Cynics were guilty, and their intentional disregard of all the conventions of sexual relations; similar too was their indifference to the family life and to the state......the fundamental purpose of Cynicism in all these determinations is to make man entirely independent."[9] Again, the isolation of the individual shows itself in the hedonistic philosophers in their indifference to public life. Aristippus rejoiced that in his sophistic wanderings no interest in politics infringed upon his personal freedom........These are all sentiments in which the Cynics and Cyraenaics agree almost verbally and in these the decline of the Greek civilization was most characteristically expressed."[10]

Effect on Religion

When individual happiness was set up as the final goal of ethical endeavour and the ideal of public or communal well-being receded into the background, religion was more and more interiorized. The decay of the ancient cults of Apollo, Zeus and Athene in the Greek world paved the way for the outburst of an intensely personal religion. "A living and personal religious sense was in all probability more diffused throughout the Greek world under the Epigoni and Roman Empire than it had been in the earlier centuries. Contact with the oriental spirit brought to many a stronger intensity in religious life; religion is no longer preoccupied with the physical and political world, its horizon lies beyond the grave and its force is otherworldliness. Men flock to the mysteries seeking communion with the divinity by sacrament and sus-

taining their faith by mystical dogmas".[11]

Neo-pythagoreanism initiated the mystic direction of thought in the ancient world and thereby dealt a heavy blow to all scientific tendencies. Mystic experience is always based on personal intuition and must, of necessity, set aside reason which is more closely connected with social experience. The saints of Neo-pythagoreanism were divinely favoured men blessed with an immediate and intuitive grasp of the intelligible. Daemonology was the theoretic basis for the peculiar amalgamation of this monotheism with the Mysteries. It rested upon the need of bridging the chasm between God's transcendence and the world.[12]

Neo-pythagoreanism had very little to do with the original Pythagorean philosophy, but more with the religious spirit of the Pythagorean mysteries. But Neo-pythagoreanism shares this with the Jewish sect of Essenes to such a degree that the origin of Essenes and their new religious conception may be sought in the contact of Judaism with the Orphic Pythagorean mysteries. The practical consequence of this contact was in Palestine the origination of the Essenes; the theoretic consequence was in Alexandria the philosophy of Philo.[13]

Philo who was the greatest of all the Jewish philosophers of the Alexandrian school had close affiliations with Plato, the later Pythagoreans and the Stoics. Yet with all this he remained a Jew. In the philosophy of Philo, God's transcendence is so absolute that there remains not the least possibility of His having any connection with the material world. In this way Philo gives a new form to the Platonic world of Ideas which stands in absolute independence of the world of matter. To predicate any quality of God would be, for Philo, to reduce Him to the sphere of finite existence. Of

Him we can only say that He is not *what* He is and such negative predications as to His being appear to Philo, as to the later Pythagoreans and the Neo-Platonists, the only way of securing His absolute elevation over the world.

A consistent application of Philo's abstract conception of God would exclude the possibility of an active relation of God to the world. To overcome this difficulty Philo holds that since God cannot enter into direct relations with the impure and evil matter which, in contrast to Him, is passive, potencies go out from Him with which He forms and directs the world. These (Stoical) Potencies were identified on the one hand with the Platonic Ideas, and, on the other, with the angels of the Jewish religion. Their unity, however, is the Logos the second God, the content, on the one hand, of all original ideas and, on the other, of the teleological formative forces that reveal God's presence in the world.[14]

The same problem of Divine transcendence and the necessity of connecting God and the world which gave birth to the Alexandrian Jewish philosophy of Philo also produced the Neo-Platonist theory of emanation. There were other causes too at work. "In the development of ancient thought the individualization and the contemplativeness of the spiritual life kept equal pace, and created finally the burning desire to conceive of the divine essence immediately and wholly with the innermost activity of the soul,......to unite oneself entirely and undividedly with that essence. But the more that confidence in the ancient forms of mythical representation vanished, the farther off, the more unknown, and the more incomprehensible appeared the divine essence".[15]

Neo-Platonism

The problem was solved by Plotinus by means of an emanation theory. The system has been briefly set out by a writer in the following passage.[16]

"The primeval being is, as opposed to the many, the one; as opposed to the finite, the Infinite, the unlimited . . . But one can not attach moral attributes to the original being, because these would imply limitation. It has no attributes of any kind; it is being without magnitude, without life, without thought; in strict propriety, indeed, we ought not to speak of it as existing; it is "above existence" "above goodness." It is also an active force without substraction; as active force the primeval Being is perpetually producing something else, without alteration or motion or diminution of itself. The production is not a physical process, but an emission of force; and since the product has real existence only by virtue of the original existence working in it, Neo-Platonism may be described as a species of dynamic pantheism.

"The original being first of all throws out the Nous which is the perfect image of the One and the archetype of all existing things. It is at once being and thought, ideal world and idea. As image, the Nous corresponds perfectly to the One, but as derived from it, it is entirely different. The image and product of the motionless *nous* is the soul, which according to Plotinus is, like the nous, immaterial. Its relation to the *nous* is the same as that of the *nous* to the One. It stands between the *nous* and the phenomenal world, is permeated and illuminated by the former, but is also in contact with the latter. The *nous* is indivisible, the soul may preserve its unity, and remain in the *nous*, but at the same time it has the power of uniting with the corporeal world and thus being disintegrated. It therefore occupies an inter-

mediate position."

Plotinus explains the existence of matter on the analogy of light gradually fading away into darkness. The streaming out of the divine essence degenerates finally in matter, and just as the gleaming light is lost in the darkness, souls are supposed to create matter out of themselves and enter into it as formative powers. The world of sense phenomena too has an eternal existence, like that of the soul. In a circular process of development it unrolls the archetype of Ideas. Therefore the conception of nature in Plotinus is not only teleological, it is downright magical. Every event is an activity of the soul: the pure world soul creates gods, star-spirits and demons out of itself.

As far as his ethical doctrine is concerned, Plotinus shared with the Cynics and the Cyrenaics, their aversion to social and political life. Like them, he set up man's independence of the world as the goal of ethical endeavour. Conduct was of little value to him since it bound the soul to the material world. Social and political integrity is only a preparation by which the soul learns how to become free from the power of sense. Therefore the teaching of Plotinus was without significance for political life.

True spirituality had little to do with social or political conduct. It consisted rather in the attempt of the soul to reach back to the *nous* from which it came. Pure sense-perception is of little help to the soul for this return. The most potent incentive is found in the love for the beautiful which diverts the soul from sense-impressions and turns it into the illuminating Idea. He who has an immediate recognition of the pure Idea is travelling to a higher perfection. But true blessedness is attained only in an ecstasy, when man is able to transcend thought and attain complete contact and

union with God, forgetting both himself and the objective world. "Plotinus regarded this highest holiness as a grace which comes only to few, and to these but seldom. He granted that the culture of positive religion is a help to the attainment of this ecstatic condition, although in other respects he opposed positive religion".[17]

Neo-Platonism is, in one aspect the consummation, in another the collapse of the ancient philosophy. Never before in Greek or Roman speculation had the consciousness of man's dignity and superiority to nature found such adequate expression; never before had real science and pure knowledge been so undervalued and despised by the leaders of culture as they were by the Neo-Platonists.[18]

Gnosticism

We have seen that the central problem both of Philo's doctrine of the Logos and that of Neo-Platonism was to find some method by means of which a relation could be established between a transcendent God and the material universe. Philo solved this problem by positing an intermediary between God and the world who dwells with God as His eldest son. He is also the Idea of Ideas, the whole mind of God going out of itself in creation. Plotinus solved the same problem through the mediation of *Nous* which, in one of its aspects, is in contact with the world-soul. The world-soul has two potencies and its lower part creates the body of the world and enters into it.

Both these doctrines presuppose, in some form or other, that matter is inherently evil and, therefore, God could not have direct contact with it. This was a very ancient idea which seems to have come down from Plato. In Plato's philosophy the world of matter and sense-experience was unreal and deceptive. Reality

belonged to the world of ideas only. Aristotle mitigated this sharp dualism but he too regarded matter as the cause of the imperfect and the accidental.

Like Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism was yet another attempt to explain how God, the Perfect Being, could create the world of matter and enter into relationship with matter which was the very principle of evil.

In keeping with the aristocratic tendency of all mystery-religions, Gnosticism anticipated redemption for only a limited number of chosen spirits. It consisted not so much in the profession of certain opinions as in the practice of certain rites which were supposed to aid the soul in its effort to shake off its fetters.

At the head of the Gnostic system stands a supreme God who is not so much a personal deity as the abstract ground of all existence. From the supreme God, there spring forth a number of beings in a descending scale of dignity who are arranged in pairs of male and female and in their totality make up the Pleroma —the fullness of blessedness and perfection.

In later Gnosticism, the members of the Pleroma bear the name of Aeons and are created in successive pairs by a process of emanation.

The process of redemption becomes necessary through the fall from the Pleroma of the member that stands lowest in rank. To this Aeon or power is assigned the name of *Sophia*.

The fall of Sophia breaks up the perfect harmony of the Pleroma and this cannot be restored until the lost light is recovered from the darkness. An Aeon of supreme rank—the Soter or Christus undertakes the work of deliverance.[19]

A singular feature of Gnosticism is the identification of the inferior God (Demiourgos) with the God of the Old Testament. This was probably an attempt to

solve the riddle which perplexed the early Christians, who from the beginning were compelled to deny the validity of the Law, while acknowledging its claim to divine origin. The God of the Old Testament was regarded as different from the God revealed by Jesus Christ and in some sense hostile to Him.

Manichaeism

Mani seems to have been confronted with the same problem—that of explaining how the perfect Being could create and direct a world composed of matter which was the principle of evil. His solution was, according to Shahrastānī,[20] that the material universe is composed of two principles both of which are eternal. One of them is light, the other Darkness. The two present a total antithesis to each other in every respect. The followers of Mani, adds Shahrastānī, differ as to the cause of their mixture and as to the way in which they got mixed up. Some of them believed that their mixture was purely accidental, while others hold that Darkness, the evil principle, was the more aggressive of the two and defiled light by getting itself mixed with it, with the object of causing it to become impure. In any case, five elements of darkness got themselves mixed with five elements of light, whereupon the king of light commanded one of his angels to construct the material universe so that the five light elements could be extricated from the five elements of darkness.

In the opinion of Iqbāl,[21] Mani was the first to venture the suggestion that the universe is due to the activity of the Devil, and hence essentially evil—"a proposition which seems to me to be the only logical justification of a system which preaches renunciation as the guiding principle of life."

The Ethics and Metaphysics of the Qur'an

We have examined the main features of classical religion and ethics and find that the ancient world was obsessed by the dualism of God and Matter, Body and Spirit, and in order to bridge this gulf, it had to create some intermediary beings such as the logos, the *Nous*, and the Aeons. The distance between God and the World, Spirit and Matter was bridged over through this mediatory process.

The fall of man and his separation from God made it necessary that some means should be suggested whereby man could return to God and regain his lost dignity. From this came the idea of redemption and that of a redeemer with a whole mythology built round his person, as happened in the case of Christianity. The original Jewish idea of a Messiah was that of a ruler who would put an end to the Roman tyranny. "The Roman Empire "dreadful and strong exceedingly" was now to be succeeded by an everlasting dominion, established by "one like unto a son of man" (Ke bar enash) "to whom God would give dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, languages should serve him".[22] Christianity changed this concept of a temporal Messiah into a Messiah who had a purely spiritual mission. By means of a rich mythology borrowed, in part, from Mystery religions, Jesus was deified.

The doctrine of original sin is very prominent in Christianity with its sharpened antithesis of flesh and spirit. Although Christianity did not regard the world as wholly evil, nevertheless it did encourage the attitude of renunciation. Manichaeism went a step further and taught that the world was wholly evil and that renunciation was the proper goal of life. The Gnostics similarly believed that the world was created by the devil.

Neo-Platonism disparaged sense perception and everything connected therewith. Its recipe for redemption was mystic contemplation leading to ecstasy. In the Greek world, as we have shown, there prevailed a refined hedonism which taught the individual to find his happiness in isolation from and in independence of his fellow-beings. The various mystery religions prevailing in the ancient world pushed man towards contemplative mysticism. Every where the bonds of social cooperation were loosening and quietism was on the increase. Side by side, the idea was growing that salvation and redemption was reserved only for a chosen few—those who could attain to ecstasy (as in Neo-Platonism) or to the highest stage of renunciation (as in Manichaeism). Even Christianity developed the doctrine of the elect. Thus religion was undermining social and spiritual democracy and thereby strengthened political tyranny and dictatorship. The forces of democracy and equality were on retreat in almost every sphere of life. The prevalence of mystic doctrines with their emphasis on intuition, ecstasy and contemplation led to the decay of the scientific spirit and the collapse of human reason, thus strengthening the anti-democratic trends of thought.

Into this world was revealed the Qur'ān which repudiated all strains of thought implicit in classical thinking. There is not the slightest suggestion in the Qur'ān of the dualism of God and the world, spirit and matter. As Iqbāl says, "There is no such thing as a profane world. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of the spirit. All is holy ground. As the Prophet so beautifully puts it: 'The whole of this earth is a mosque".[23] The Qur'ān, therefore, did not disparage the life of sense, since it says in clear terms: "(O man), follow not that whereof

thou hast no knowledge. Lo! the hearing and the sight and the heart—of each of these it will be asked." (XVII-36). This means that every person will be held responsible for the way he makes use of his sense-perception.

Since the Qur'ān did not accept the dualism of God and the world, flesh and spirit, the material and the spiritual, it did not set forth any theory whereby this sharp dualism could be mediated and the chasm between God and the world bridged. The Qur'ān says that man was created through a direct fiat of God. "Lo! the likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, then He said unto him, Be! and he is" (III-59). There was thus no intermediary being between man and God. Similarly, God created the heavens and the earth by Himself without employing a subordinate agency. "Lo! your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days" (VII-54). The Qur'ān further denies the existence of any intermediaries between God and man. "Now you have come unto Us solitary as We did create you at first, and ye have left behind you all that We bestowed upon you, and We behold not with you those your intercessors, of whom ye claimed they possessed a share in you. Now is the bond between you severed, and that which you presumed has failed you." (VI-95). Thus God and man stand in direct relation to each other with no one to intervene between them. For this very reason there is no concept of redemption or a Redeemer in Islam. Man must stand on his own legs and depend on himself. God only can support him and none else. The Qur'ān denies that any one can intercede with God in order to deliver man from his own deeds or misdeeds. "Who is he that intercedeth with Him save by His leave"? (II-253). As the Qur'ān

does not accept the idea of original sin, and the Prophet says clearly that every child born into the world is born on nature (*i.e.* free from all evil), no Redeemer is required. Man shapes his ultimate destiny by means of his own deeds. No one can help him in this process except God.

The concept of nature in the Qur'ān is very different from that of the classical world. Islam does not regard the natural as in any way holier than what is human or as capable of setting moral standards. But natural phenomena are not evil by themselves. Though constituted of matter, nature is not hostile to man or God. Ethically it is neutral. In a way the natural and the material are divinely constituted, because they are God's creation. The Qur'ān directs its followers to observe the natural phenomena, for they are signs or portents of God, as the Qur'ān calls them. "And of His portents are the night and the day and the sun and the moon. Adore not the sun nor the moon but adore Allah Who created them, if it is in truth Him Whom ye worship....And of His portents (is this): that thou seest the earth lowly, but when We send down water thereon it thrilleth and groweth." (XLI-37 to 39). Again, the Qur'ān directs man's attention to the need of employing the senses with which God has gifted him in order to look around and observe the phenomena of nature which serve him in various ways. "And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers knowing nothing and gave you hearing and sight and hearts.....Have they not seen the birds obedient in mid-air? None holdeth them save Allah. Lo! herein, verily, are the portents for a people who believe. And Allah hath given you in your houses an abode, and hath given you (also), of the hides of cattle, houses which ye find light (to carry) on the day of

migration and on the day of pitching camp; and of their wool and their fur and their hair, caparison and comfort for a while. And Allah hath given you of that which He hath created, shelter from the sun; and hath given you places of refuge in the mountains, and hath given you coats to ward off the heat from you, and coats (of armour) to save you from your foolhardiness. Thus does He perfect His favours unto you" (XVI-78 to 81).

Innumerable verses like these can be quoted from the Qur'ān to show that it directed men's attention to the natural phenomena and sharpened their faculty of observation. It is, of course, true that the object of the Qur'ān was not to awaken the scientific spirit of man, as an end in itself but as a means of sharpening his sense of obligation to God for His favours. But whatever the object of the Qur'ān, the necessary effect of this kind of teaching was that man's power of observation was brought into play and the scientific spirit was roused. The Qur'ān often uses the term 'Tas<u>kh</u>īr' and its various forms when it refers to the natural phenomena. 'Tas<u>kh</u>īr' literally means conquest of something and its utilization for one's objects and purposes. This must have awakened a feeling in the minds of the Muslim that nature is his servant, not the master and that it can be utilised for the benefit of man.

On the whole, it can be safely asserted that nowhere in the whole range of the world's religious literature do we come across a book which teaches man to make full use of his senses and utilise the energies latent in nature for his benefit. The Qur'ān did more. It encouraged literacy, it insisted on its followers to acquire more and more knowledge. The very first verses revealed to the Prophet command him to read. "Read in the name of thy Lord Who createth, createth man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous,

who teacheth by the pen." (XCVI—1 to 5). The Prophet is asked to pray for the increase of knowledge. "Lord! add to my knowledge." (XX-113).

This brings us to the most important point stressed by Iqbāl in his lecture referred to above that the birth of Islam was the birth of the inductive intellect. It is clear that the inductive process can start only where there is sufficient material of knowledge, for induction proceeds from the particular to the general. But if we do not have enough facts and particulars we lack adequate basis for building general conclusions. Before Islam, thoughtful men and women did not have the necessary data available to proceed from the particular to the general. True, knowledge was pursued in the ancient world, but it was limited to a particular class of people—the priesthood—and restricted to narrow spheres. The Babylonians, the Egyptians and the Greeks had a certain amount of scientific data but the rise of speculative philosophy, the growth of mystery religions and the stress laid on intuition by religious systems such as that of Neo-Platonism dealt a heavy blow to whatever scientific spirit had been generated by the practical needs of life. Islam made the acquisition of knowledge a religious obligation. The Prophet commanded his followers to pursue knowledge even if it could be had in China and declared that the ink of the scholar is holier than the prayers of the ascetic. Therefore knowledge which was confined to a special class of persons became the universal need of all citizens. Again, Islam put an end to all useless speculations about the nature and person of God and His relation to the world. The Qur'ān had given a clear and satisfying conception of God and His connection with the universe. Therefore, the Muslims felt no need to speculate on this subject. How much human energy had been wasted on

such empty and useless speculations will become apparent to any one who reads the controversies of the Arians and the followers of Athanasius in Christianity. In Islam no such intellectual disputes arose except for a brief period and under external influences which soon faded away. It is a matter of the deepest significance that while scholastic and theological disputes among the Muslims petered out soon after the reign of the first four caliphs of the Abbasid dynasty (*i.e.*, by the end of Mamun's Caliphate), the scientific movement in Islam continued in full vigour for many centuries. It is true that the Muslims learned a good deal from the translations of the scientific books written by Greek scholars, but the superstructure that they built on these inadequate foundations was so imposing that all the subtleties of Muslim scholasticism and theology pale by its side into utter insignificance. Further, the scientific and inductive spirit of Islam is attested by the fact that while the 'Ulemā' (Religious scholars) of Islam adopted a neutral attitude towards Muslim science, they always viewed with suspicion the scholasticism (Kalām) built up by the Muslims under foreign influences, and some of them even laid it under a religious interdiction. Therefore, Iqbāl is perfectly justified in his claim that the birth of Islam was the birth of inductive intellect, for it is only with Islam that human knowledge and command of facts increased to such an extent as to enable human thought to reach out beyond particulars to universals.

We now come to the theory of creation as set out in the Qur'ān. Before the advent of Islam, creation had been explained in different ways. The Qur'ān's theory of creation is unique in that man, far from being portrayed as having been at cross-purpose with God, is shown as His agent in so far as he comes down to the earth in express fulfilment of a divine purpose.

In spite of his momentary aberration, man does not fall from grace. He continues to enjoy divine favour and blessing after his descent to the earth. Let us hear what the Qur'ān has to say on the subject. "And when thy Lord said to the angels: Lo! I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth, they said: wilt Thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: surely I know that which ye know not. And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to angels saying: Inform me of these if ye are truthful. They said: Be glorified! We have no knowledge save that which Thou hast taught us. Lo! Thou, only Thou art the Knower, the Wise. He said: O Adam inform them of their names, and when he informed them of their names, He said: Did I not tell you that I know the secret of the heavens and earth? And I know that which ye disclose, and that which ye hide. And when We said unto the Angels: prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He demurred through pride and so became a disbeliever. And We said: "Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden and eat ye freely (of the fruits) thereof where ye will; but come not nigh this tree lest ye become wrong-doers. But Satan caused them to deflect therefrom and expelled them from the (happy) state in which they were; and We said: Fall down, one of you a foe unto the other! there shall be for you on earth a habitation and provision for a time. Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelation) and He relented toward him. Lo! He is the relenting, the Merciful. We said: Go down, all of you, from hence; but verily there cometh unto you from Me a guidance and whoso followeth My guidance, there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve. But they who

disbelieve and deny Our revelation, such are the rightful owners of the fire. They shall abide therein." (II—30 to 39).

Thus, according to the Qur'ān, Adam, before his so-called fall, had already been appointed God's vicegerent on earth and, of this status, he was not deprived even after the Satan betrayed him into sin. His absolute superiority over the rest of the creation was fully established when the angels were commanded to prostrate themselves before him. What more exalted position can any creature hope to enjoy? The objection of the angels that man will indulge in destructive activities was brushed aside by God with the remark that He knew what they did not know, which shows that God had full confidence in the constructive and creative abilities of man. God did not deny that man will commit evil and do mischief, but His reply to the angels was, so to say, that the good in man will triumph over the evil in him and his constructive activity will outweigh the destructive side of his life. God seems to have presaged in these lines the triumph of the Divine in man over the Satanic in him, both from the individual and collective view-points. This means that the Qur'ān believes in the ultimate victory of good over evil.

The disobedience committed by Adam caused his expulsion, but the aberration was pardoned by God, so that Adam and Eve came down to the earth in a state of sinlessness. The Qur'ān, thus, repudiates the Jewish and Christian doctrine of original sin. God not merely provided an abode for man but also promised to help him through His revealed guidance. Of course, the Qur'ān says that man will have to wade his way through conflicts, jealousies and undesirable forms of competition but those who believe in God

and His revealed word and follow the divine guidance with understanding are promised peace and happiness. In this way the story of creation handed down by the previous religions was transformed by the Qur'ān beyond recognition and new meanings were imported into it.

We now take up another feature of the classical world, namely, its intuitionism which has a bearing on the doctrine of the finality of Prophethood in Islam. We have already referred to the remark of Iqbāl that while the mystic does not wish to return from the repose of unitive experience, the prophet returns to insert himself into the sweep of history with a view to control its forces. Now, it is this static type of mystic consciousness which enjoys its own inner states and flees from the historic forces around it that the classical world was developing under the influence of movements like Neo-pythagoreanism, Neo-Platonism and mystery-religions. All these movements of the ancient world encouraged peitistic quietism, mystic contemplation and ecstasy, for the return to God could be accomplished only by these methods. This highly individualistic type of religion did not need reason which it disparaged and undervalued, for reason is a social phenomenon. It takes at least two persons to reason out things. But those who lived secluded lives felt no need to reason out things with their fellow-men. Their emphasis lay on intuition, which is a highly debatable faculty, and which can serve the individual only. It is true that intuition has its place in the mental processes. But what is intuited must be made public through intelligent expression in an arguable form. Only then does it serve society. Those who sought union with God for themselves alone felt no need to make their intuition public or present it in an intelligible form which would have

brought their intuition into the realm of reason and understanding. Such people lived by ignoring society altogether and he who ignores society places himself outside the historic process, which rests upon social cooperation and mutual understanding between men. But the prophet, as Iqbāl rightly remarks, returns from his unitive experience to insert himself into the sweep of history and control its forces. Now the forces of history can be controlled only by the method of social living and intelligent understanding of each other. Here the reasoning process must come into play, for society is a vast arena of argument and counter-argument at all levels and only those succeed in controlling the forces of history who can convince others by the argument of word and deed. Therefore, when the prophet has succeeded in establishing a society and giving it a new direction, care must be taken to preserve those institutions and laws in which the vital values and fundamental principles of the society have been enshrined. If this is not done, the society will ultimately lose the direction on which the prophet set it. This is impossible of accomplishment, if any other authority, besides that of the prophet, is recognised as binding on men. Hence the prophet abolishes what Iqbāl calls non-rational modes of consciousness, and sets free the reason of man. In the words of Iqbāl, prophecy having reached its perfection, discovers the need of its own abolition. All intuition, therefore, whether of the mystic or that of any other group, lacks validity in the eyes of a Muslim, unless it is publicly argued and publicly validated or, in other words, brought before the bar of reason, which is not an individual but a social phenomenon. The finality of prophethood in Islam is really the repudiation of the principle of authority in religion. Besides the authority of the prophet, no other authority can

stand up and say, "this is my intuitive grasp of the problem in hand, you must accept it without further discussion". All opinion must be publicly debated and brought before the bar of reason. That which is accepted after full discussion and through criticism and counter-criticism has behind it the backing of the consensus of the community. This is the principle of Ijmā' in Islam, the most democratic principle ever discovered and applied by any community at any time in world history. Unfortunately, the Muslims confined the process of Ijmā to the learned few, perhaps because learning in those days was confined to a few people and, again, only a few religious sciences were recognised as worthy of respect. To-day, the door of Ijmā' should be opened to all members of the community, for this is the day of universal literacy. Only in this way Ijmā' can become effective.

Finally, the ancient world was wrecked by the doctrine that it is only a chosen few who can hope for redemption. This doctrine was held in various forms by the followers of mystery religions,—Neo-Platonism, Christianity, and Manichaeism. People were grouped together according to their spiritual attainments. There was further the institution of priesthood, the division between the clergy and the laity. All these things struck at the root of human equality and paved the way for spiritual and political tyranny. Islam made a clean sweep of all suc doctrines and institutions and threw open the door to spiritual opportunity for each and all alike by abolishing the institution of priesthood and doing away with the doctrine of the elect. In the social and economic spheres, it also succeeded in restoring in a large measure the natural equality of mankind by means of institutions such as the congregational prayers and Zakat (poor-tax).

It thus paved the way for political democracy and in some measure even gave it concrete shape, for the rule of the first four Caliphs was largely democratic, judged even by modern standards. The ultimate aim of Islam was to establish full-fledged democracy in all spheres, spiritual, social, economic and political, for political democracy depends on the possession of certain spiritual qualities by the members of the community. Without these qualities of character, it is idle to dream of democracy in the political sphere. The acquisition and promotion of these qualities is helped by economic and social factors, but ultimately, it is religion which creates and supports the qualities of character necessary for the development of a fully democratic system of life, provided religion is neither divorced from the economic, social and political problems of life, nor exploited for political and economic ends.

NOTES

1. Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbāl: *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1962 p. 124.
2. Dr. Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 125.
3. Dr. Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 127.
4. Dr. Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 128.
5. Dr. Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl: Ibid, p. 131.
6. W. Windle-band: *History of Ancient Philosophy*, New Dover Edition, 1956, p. 122.
7. S. W. Bason: *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Vol. II, part II, New York, p. 81.
8. W. Windle-band: op. cit., p. 133.
9. W. Windle-band: Ibid., p. 144.
10. W. Windle-band: Ibid., p. 150
11. L. R. Farnell: *Article on Greek Religion in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VI, Edinburgh, 1959.
12. W. Windle-band: op. cit., p. 344.
13. W. Windle-band: Ibid., p. 343.
14. W. Windle-band: Ibid., p. 348.

15. W. Windle-band: Ibid., p. 369.
16. Adolph Von Harnae: *Article on Neo-Platonism, Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XVI, 1951 Edition.
17. W. Windle-band: op. cit., p. 375.
18. Adolph Von Harnae: op. cit.
19. W. Crooks: *Article on Gnosticism, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VI, Edinburgh, 1959.
20. Shahrastānī: *Al-Milal wan-Naḥl* Vol. II, Cairo, 1317 A.H., pp. 81-84.
21. Iqbāl, Dr. Sir Muḥammad: *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Lahore, 1959, p. 15.
22. S. W. Bason: op. cit., Vol. II, part II, p. 59.
23. Iqbāl, Dr. Sir Muḥammad: op. cit., p. 155.

Chapter II

IQBĀL ON MUSLIM RATIONALISM

Discussing the causes which reduced the Law of Islam practically to a state of immobility, Iqbāl expresses the opinion[1] that "partly owing to a misunderstanding of the ultimate motives of Rationalism, and partly owing to the unrestrained thought of particular Rationalists, conservative thinkers regarded this movement as a force of disintegration and considered it a danger to the stability of Islam as a social polity. Their main purpose, therefore, was to preserve the social iutegrity of Islam and to realize this the only course open to them was to ultilize the binding force of the Sharī'at and to make the structure of their legal system as rigorous as possible."

In his doctorial thesis, "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia," Iqbāl has something more to say with regard to the motives of the rationalists and the anti-rationalists. The dialectic of Rationalism, he adds,[2] destroyed the personality of God, and reduced divinity to a bare indefinable universality. The anti-rationalist movement, on the other hand, though it preserved the dogma of personality, destroyed the external reality of nature. "In spite of Nazzām's theory of "Atomic objectification", the atom of the Rationalist possesses an independent objective reality; that of the Asha'rite is a fleeting moment of Divine will. The one saves nature, and tends to do away with the

God of Theology; the other sacrifices nature to save God as conceived by the orthodox."[3]

Iqbāl's conclusion that the Rationalists (the M'utazilah) were trying to save nature is only one aspect of the intellectual activity of the M'utazilah. The M'utazilah tried to do much else. In the beginning their main effort was directed to defending Islam against the attacks of its opponents.

The Beginning of the M'utazilah

Recent historical research has revealed, writes Dr. Faḍlur Raḥmān,[4] that the M'utazilah were a group of Muslim intellectuals, who in an arena of great ideological conflict in the Middle East in the early centuries of Islam, had successfully defended Islam against Gnosticism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. They were no mere intellectual idlers. One of the weapons with which they defended Islam, adds the writer, was the doctrine of human free-will and responsibility which they sought to formulate in terms of the current stock of philosophical ideas of Greek origin.

Another view as to the origin of the M'utazilah is that they were engaged primarily in refuting the Mujassamah (Anthropomorphists) who entered the fold of Islam from many directions. Thus, the extremists among the Shī'a held the view that God had a (physical) stature and a concrete form, and that He is an (actual) body with limbs. Many story-tellers popularised traditions in which God was described more or less in human terms with human attributes derogatory to divine majesty. But the M'utazilah went to the other extreme in upholding divine majesty and His freedom from purely human attributes. They almost denuded God of every attribute and left Him bare of everything except His essence.

Side by side with their refutation of the anthropomorphists, the M'utazilah sought to refute the Mujbarah (predeterminists) and some of the extremists among the Shī'a who held that God was capable of doing injustice to men. Among the Mujbarah (predeterminists), mention must be made of Jahm b. Ṣafwān who headed the movement of predeterminism and went to extreme lengths in advocating the doctrine and "it has been proved on historical grounds that the early M'utazilites entered into polemics with the Jahmiyah and dissociated themselves from them."[6]

It is argued that in refuting their opponents the M'utazilah thought was imperceptibly influenced in some degree by the very ideas which they were seeking to counter. This is the view expressed by Dr. Nyberg[7] who says that this explains the weakness (D'uf) and diffidence (Taraddud) which marked the intellectual efforts of the Mu'tazilah. We do not, however, agree with his further remark that he who fights an enemy is bound to catch his spirit in some degree. Therefore, while the form of the M'utazilah dialectics must necessarily have been set by that of their opponents, since they could not choose their own plane of discussion, it is not necessary that they should have been materially influenced by the thought of their opponents. Their deviations from the path of moderation must have some other explanation, one of which certainly is, as Iqbāl has pointed out, that they ignored the facts of human nature and "strove to express faith in the form of concepts or terms of pure thought."[8]

Naturalism of the M'utazilah

As pointed out by Iqbāl, the M'utazilah tried to save nature at the expense of God's personality. In substantiation of his argument, Iqbāl points out that

the interest of Nazzām chiefly consisted in the exclusion of all arbitrariness from the orderly course of nature. The same interest in naturalism led Al-Jāḥiz to define will in a purely negative manner. "Though the rationalist thinkers did not want to abandon the idea of a personal will, yet they endeavoured to find a deeper ground for the independence of natural phenomena. And this ground they found in matter itself. Nazzām taught the infinite divisibility of matter, and obliterated the distinction between substance and accident."[9]

However, the pertinent question which comes up here is whether the M'utazilah began their dialectical career with a conscious attempt to exclude arbitrariness from nature or were led to such an attempt during the course of the development of their dialectics. It would be truer to say that their first endeavour was to uphold the free-will of man against the predestinarians, particularly the Jahmīyah. But as they progressed, they felt that man's free-will can be vindicated satisfactorily only by a denial of all divine intervention. In this they were certainly mistaken and were taking a course which was fundamentally opposed to the religious instincts of makind. However, they carried their logic to its farthest limits, unmindful of what happened to religion and thus ended by becoming pure naturalists.

The M'utazilah Doctrine of Free-will

A curious consequence of their belief in human free-will was that the M'utazilah denied the power of God with regard to man's acts and the phenomena of nature. An extreme naturalism of this kind finds expression in the views held by M'uammar b. 'Abbād. According to al-Baghdādī,[10] "he was the head of the atheists and his aberrations are many, among which is

his belief that God did not create any of the accidents. He created only substances. Then they created their own accidents which means that God did not create colour, or smell, heat or cold, humidity or dryness, motion or rest, sight or hearing, blindness or deafness, pleasure or pain, and health or disease."

We get a much more complete view of the M'utazilah stand with regard to the respective Powers of God and man in Bāqillānī who says[11] that the entire body of the M'utazilah believed that God had no power over their small or great acts and tbat He gives them power over that with respect to which He Himself has no power. This statement shows that the M'utazilah had come to hold the position taken by nineteenth-century deists. They believed in the initial power of God but denied His power to influence the course of events after He had created the world and man and vested them with powers and potencies natural to them. In other words, the world and man possessed the capacity for self-development and no longer needed divine help or guidance. This is exactly the conclusion arrived at by Iqbāl who says[12] that "the Rationalists were philosophically materialists, and theologically deists." No wonder that this trend of of thought called forth a strong reaction, for if it had prevailed, it would have meant the end of all religion, not merely Islam.

This was really going too far and shows that in their desire to divest God of all His powers, the M'utazilah did not keep in view even the requirements of logical consistency, for power over something entails power over its opposite. When Nazzām says that God has no power over injustice and falsehood (that is, God cannot be unjust or false) it necessarily follows

that He has no power over truth and justice (that is, God cannot do justice or be truthful).[14] In the same manner it can be argued if God has power to cause men to disbelieve, He must have equal power to cause them to believe.

A more consistent argument to limit God's power was advanced by Abu al-Hudhayl 'Allāf who held that there is a last limit for every eternal act of God. When that limit has been reached, God cannot be said to have any further power over any act, small or great.[15] On this basis, he argued that those who occupy the abode of bliss (paradise) will remain in a state of quiescence in which they will enjoy no pleasure and will have no power, neither they nor their Creator—over anything, because, maintained Abu al-Hudhayl, just as there is a first (limit) to every accident before which nothing can occur, so there is a last limit, after which nothing can come to pass.

This is very good as far as logic goes. But the Qur'ān says that God has unlimited power over everything and Abu al-Hudhayl's logic would take away the power of God which is repugnant to man's religious consciousness. Such attempts to apply the rigour of human logic to the things which do not fall strictly within its scope merely demonstrate the fact that in dealing with the problems of theology, logic cannot be pushed too far without detriment to the fundamentals of religion.

In accordance with their general stand on the free-will of man, some of the Mu'tazilah began to ascribe to man power to do things which the Qur'ān had claimed to belong solely to the sphere of divine power and authority. Thus, the Qur'ān had said: "Thou didst not unite their hearts but God united them." (VIII : 62),

but Hishām b. 'Amr al -Fūṭī said that men united their hearts voluntarily and of their own power and that God did not unite their hearts.[16] Similarly, he claimed that God does not approve of faith in the faithful and adorn their hearts therewith, though the Qur'ān says clearly: "He it is Who approved of faith in you and adorned your hearts therewith" (XLIX : 6). The Mu'tazilah interpreted the Qur'ānic verse, "Say: God! Thou art the owner of dominions, Who givest dominion to whomsoever Thou likest, and takest away dominion from whomsoever Thou likest" (III : 25) in conformity with the general tenor of their thought. According to Rāzī, it was the opinion of Ka'abī that this statement about degradation and elevation did not signify the exercise of divine power by voluntary choice. It meant that God elevated those who deserved elevation and degraded those who disobeyed His commands. In support of this, Ka'abī quotes the Qur'ānic verses, "The wrong-doers cannot hope to benefit by My covenant." (II : 23) and "God preferred him above you and added to the stature of his knowledge and body." Jubbā'ī's opinion is also quoted by Rāzī that this statement about elevation is specific to just rulers and, as for unjust rulers, it is impossible that their dominion be God-given.

The Mu'tazilah stand on the Divine Attributes

Before the rise of the Mu'tazilah, the Jahmīyah had started the general philosophical trend towards the negation of divine attributes. According to Shahrastānī,[18] the Mu'tazilah agreed with Jahmīyah in the latter's negation of the 'eternal' attributes of God. Among the assertions of the Jahmīyah was that those attributes which belong to the creation cannot be ascribed to God, because this leads to the resemblance of the Creator and the created. On this basis, they denied that God is

living or that He is knowing. But they affirmed His being powerful, active and His being a creator, because nothing in His creation can be described as having the attributes of power, activity and creativity. The argument advanced by Jahm. b. Ṣafwān was that "if God is said to have the attribute of eternal knowledge, then that knowledge would either be God or other than God. If the knowledge of God is other than God and it is also eternal, then this would amount to associating with God (an eternal other than Him), and if the knowledge of God is God, then God would be knowledge and this is rank atheism."[19]

Some of the Mu'tazilah seemed to have followed the cue given by Jahm. b. Ṣafwān. Although they did not deny that the attributes of God exist, they either lost sight of the distinction between God and His attributes or explained those attributes in negative terms. For example, Ash'arī says that Abu-al-Ḥudhayl maintained that God is knowing with a knowledge which is He Himself. All other attributes of God were explained in a similar manner. He further maintains, adds Ash'arī, "when I say that God is knowing, I affirm for Him a knowledge which is He Himself and I negate from Him ignorance and I point to something known (to Him) either now or in future; when I say that He is powerful, I negate from Him weakness and I affirm for Him a power which is God Himself and I point to something over which He has power." He argued in a similar manner with regard to the attribute of life. Mu'ammar b. 'Abbād, another leading Mu'tazilah, maintained that God is knowing, but not with a knowledge, powerful but not with a power, living but not with a life, and so on. On the whole the Mu'tazilah denied the eternal attributes (صفات قديمه) of God.[21]

In regard to God's attribute of speech (کلام) the Mu'tazilah followed the argument of Jahm b. Ṣafwān referred to above, namely, that if the knowledge of God is other than God and it is also eternal. then this would amount to associating with Him a being other than Him. Therefore, the speech of God, the Mu'tazilah maintained, could not be eternal, for if it were eternal, that would mean the association of God with another eternal. Further light on the subject is thrown by the following statement of Taftāzānī[22]:

"The Mu'tazilah adhered to the view that Tauḥid (monotheism) is undermined by the affirmation of (eternal) attributes, because they (the attributes) come to occupy the position of eternal entities which possess the quality of otherness to God. Thus, there follows necessarily the eternity of beings other than God and a multiplicity of eternals. When the Christians fell into disbelief by affirming three eternals, what about the affirmation of eight eternals or more?"

Taftāzānī himself holds the Ash'ārite view that the attributes of God are neither God nor other than God (وهى لاهو ولاغيره) In other words, they constitute neither His essence nor are other than His essence. Therefore, neither the eternity of entities other than God nor the multiplicity of such entities follows from this. About the Christians, Taftāzānī says that although they did not affirm eternal entities other than God, this necessarily followed from their standpoint, because they affirmed three persons, namely, Existence, Knowledge and Life and named them Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, and they supposed that the second person, namely, Knowledge had assumed bodily form in Christ. Thus they allowed for the separation and transmission of attributes.

As with speech, so with regard to God's will, the Mu'tazilah stand was that the Divine will is originated. Referring to this stand of the Mu'tazilah, Ash'arī[24] asks them as to what the difference is between them and the Jahmīyah who said that God was knowing with a knowledge which was created. Ash'arī adds that if it was not possible for the *knowledge* of God to be created, as the Mu'tazilah believed, why did they not deny that His will was created and if their reply was that the *knowledge* of God could not be created, because this would require its origination by means of another knowledge and so on *ad infinitum*, then the same applies to the will of God, which could not be created, as this would necessitate that He is willing with a will which originated in another will.

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that although the Mu'tazilah started with very best of intentions, namely, that of defending Islamic monotheism, they pursued their logic without any thought of what ultimate effects it might produce in respect of the very objective which they were endeavouring to achieve. The explanation of God's attributes in negative terms meant that God lacked all positive attributes. This, as Iqbāl has remarked, reduced God to a bare universal. In denying positive divine attributes, the Mu'tazilah overlooked the fact that affirmation is more primary than negation, just as existence is prior to non-existence. In fact, non-existence owes its being to existence and not vice versa, just as the shadow owes its being to the sun and without the sun it could not be said to exist.

The Mu'tazilah stand on the relatioh of God's attributes and His essence was, however, based on more solid grounds and even the Ash'arites were forced to concede that there was no otherness in the divine attributes, although they held that the divine attributes were distinct

from His essence. But 'distinctness' is not otherness. The whole problem seems to have been an artificial creation of needless abstraction. There could never be any question of association or shirk as the Jahmīyah erroneously thought. If the eternal attributes of God are other than He, no association or shirk in the Islamic sense follows. When the Qur'ān uses the term association or shirk, it means something very different. Shirk really refers to the belief that there are other beings, animate or inanimate, who share with God the power that belongs to Him, or that He delegates any of his powers to such beings. But the attributes of God could not, by any stretch of imagination, be personalised and turned into co-sharers of His authority. Therefore, the danger sensed by the Jahmīyah and the Mu'tazilah was an imaginary one.

It is true, of course, that the Christians had hypostasized one of God's attributes and believed that Jesus Christ was the word of God made flesh, so that he shared divine authority with Him. But this danger of deifying the prophets had been sufficiently taken care of by the Qur'ān and the Prophet of Islam both of whom had stressed the latter's humanity in clear and unmistakable terms. Islamic monotheism was too well-grounded to be shaken by a few exercises in logic.

In so far as the problem of the relation of God's essence to His attributes is concerned, it troubled very few minds and it seems that much unnecessary intellectual effort was wasted on a problem relatively simple. When we think of a person, we think of him with all his qualities. Recall to mind any historical figure, e.g., Napoleon or Aurangzeb. Immediately he stands before your mind's eye, not merely with his essence but also with his attributes. It is impossible to separate the two and

a clear absurdity to maintain that attributes are separate from essence. However, when we discuss the different qualities of a person, we have to establish *at an intellectual level*, the distinction between him and his qualities. Therefore, the Ash'arite stand which is not very different from that of the Mu'tazilah that the attributes of God neither constitute the essence of God nor are they other than He, must be upheld.

As regards the stand taken by the Mu'tazilah with respect to the createdness of the Qur'ān (the speech of God), it is clear that while they were actuated by the best of motives in their attempt to uphold the uniqueness of God, they overlooked the fact that their logic was dragging down the Qur'ān to the level of ordinary (created) things, which would have necessarily undermined the great respect in which the Qur'ān was held by the Muslim Community in general. God and His Book are intimately connected in the Islamic articles of faith. If a Muslim believes in God as he should but does not give much weight to the teachings of the Qur'ān, he cannot be considered a good Muslim. Mere belief in the uniqueness and unity of God leads nowhere if it is not followed up by respect for the word and guidance of God. The Muslim mind instinctively reacted against the Mu'tazilah doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān, because it felt the danger to the moral uprightness of the Muslim Community in a doctrine which debased the Qur'ān and brought it on a par with other created things. The real question about the Qur'ān was not whether it was created or uncreated but whether it was the speech of God revealed to the Prophet or the creation of the Prophet's own mind. If the Qur'ān is a revelation from God, it occupies a unique position and holds a status greater than that held by any created thing. This is the crux of the problem and although the Mu'tazilah did not discuss it,

they threw their weight by implication on the other side, for this is what the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān comes to.

Reaction Against the Mu'tazilah

The reaction against the Mu'tazilah came to surface when Al-Ash'arī forsook his teacher, Al-Jubbā'ī, and started his polemics against the school of thought to which he originally belonged. Ash'arī reaffirmed positive attributes for God and asserted that they were the eternal attributes of God which subsisted with God's essence. Ash'arī's argument for the eternal nature of divine attributes, such as speech and will, was that God is the ruler of the world and a ruler is one who can command and prohibit. But He can be a commander either with a command which is eternal or one which is originated. If it is originated, it would either originate in His own essence, or in a locus. It is impossible that the command should originate in His essence, because then His essence would become a locus for accidents, and it is impossible that it should originate in a locus, for the locus would then be ascribed to Him, and it is equally impossible that it should originate in no locus, because this is irrational. Therefore, the command is eternal which subsists with Him and is one of His attributes.

Having reaffirmed the positive and eternal nature of the divine will, Ash'arī proceeded to demolish the Mu'tazilah conception of a limited God who had no power over evil and injustice and could not will them. The argument of the Ash'arite school in this regard has been briefly stated by Taftāzānī[26] as follows:

"The Mu'tazilah denied the will of God with respect to evil and mischief until they began to maintain that God willed from the non-believer that He should believe and obey and not that He should disbelieve and dis-

obey, thinking that any will with respect to what is bad and evil must itself be evil. But we do not subscribe to this view, because evil is the acquisition of the evil-doer and it should be ascribed to him alone. It follows from the Mu'tazilah stand that much of what God's creatures do, they do against God's will and this is heinous. 'Amr b. 'Ubaid relates that he was never worsted (in argument) as he was worsted by a Magian who travelled with him in a boat. 'Amr b. 'Ubaid asked him as to why he did not accept Islam. The Magian replied: because God did not will it. 'Amr said to the Magian that God willed that he should accept Islam but the devils did not leave him (freedom). The Magian replied that he preferred to remain with the stronger party. The Mu'tazilah believed that command entails will, while prohibition entails absence of will. Therefore, they thought that the faith of the disbeliever was willed by God but his disbelief was not so willed (by God)".

The next step of the Ash'arites was to downgrade man by comparison with the power and majesty of God. This was achieved through the denial of man's power to act without the express intervention of God. The Mu'tazilah had maintained that man's capacity to act existed before he accomplished any particular act. The Ash'arites held that this capacity of acting was an accident which God created in a being at the time when it intended to act in a particular way and that it did not exist before the act. Therefore, every act of man was really an acquisition of power to act from God who intervened from moment to moment and created the acts of the creature. The creature did not act. What he did was to acquire the act from God, because God was the creator not only of man but was also the creator of his acts. The Ash'arites believed that accidents could not susbsist for more than a moment and since the power to act was also

an accident, it perished as soon as the particular act was accomplished for which it had been created. The next moment, when another act was intended, God created again the power to act. This was the famous doctrine of Kasb or acquisition, according to which man really did nothing and accomplished nothing. He did not have even the power to act which belonged to God only, but he acquired the power at the moment when he intended to act in a particular manner.

The implications of the doctrine of 'Kasb' are very far-reaching, because it entails the denial of the causal nexus between events. If there is no necessary connection between one act of a man and another, all acts become atomic in their nature and divine intervention becomes necessary from moment to moment. Ghazālī, among the Ash'arites, was the first to deny causation on philosophical grounds, but the denial was already implicit in the Ash'arite doctrine of Kasb. Thus, Ash'arī not only undermined the efficacy of the human agent, he rendered the whole scheme of science groundless. Therefore, Iqbāl is perfectly justified in concluding that while the Mu'tazilah saved nature at the expense of God, the Ash'arites "sacrificed nature to save God as conceived by the orthodox."[27]

It is clear that the main ground of dispute between the Ash'arite and the Mu'tazilah schools of thought was the question of man's freedom of the will as against the power of God. The Mu'tazilah solved the question by denying the power of God and affirming the free-will of man. But their solution was one-sided. Equally one-sided was the solution offered by Al-Ash'arī who denied the efficacy of the human will and held that everything in the world was determined by God. Man was, therefore, left with no real freedom of choice. Regarding this, Dr. Faḍlur Rahman has made the acute remark that,

whereas, in the hands of Ibn Ḥanbal, the emphasis on the power and Majesty of God was a simple assertion of religious impulse, the later theologians like Al-Ash'arī, al-Mātrūdī and specially their successors transformed it into a full-fledged theological doctrine. "But their intellectual tools were no better than those of the Mu'tazilah and thus the doctrine developed one-sidedly in favour of determinism. A little later during the fourth and fifth centuries, the Muslim philosophers, being pure rationalists, developed determinism still further and, by an identification of causal, rational and theistic forms of determinism, produced a truly imposing deterministic structure of the universe."[28]

But voices were not wanting in the orthodox camp itself which questioned the determinism of Al-Ash'arī and reaffirmed man's free-will. Ibn Qayyim al-Jauzīyah,[29] for example, accuses a Mu'tazilah, al-Nāshī, that according to his doctrine, there would be acts, for which there is no agent and he goes on to say that this accusation is equally applicable to the doctrine propounded by Al-Ash'arī for, according to him, man is not the doer of his acts but God (because man only acquires the act which is created by God). But if God had been its doer, its effects would have reverted to Him and names could have been derived for God from that act لعادت احكامها عليه واشتقت له منها اسماء but this is impossible in the case of God. Therefore, it follows from Al-Ash'arī's argument that there are acts for which there is no doer.

Similarly, Ibn Taymīyah criticises[30] the Ash'arites for overlooking the distinction between the will, love and pleasure of God and for making all human beings equal in their relation to God, whether they commit good or evil. Ibn Taymīyah says that the Ash'arites are of the

view that God loves disbelief and disobedience and is pleased with them, just as He wills them.

In another place Ibn Taymīyah offers the following criticism[31] in respect of the extreme views held by the Ash'arites and the Ṣūfīs:

"It ought to be known that on this point many groups of Ahl-e-Kalām (theologians) and Ṣūfīs have erred and adopted a position which is actually worse than that of the Mu'tazilah and other upholders of the freedom of the will (which the theologians and Ṣūfīs had sought to remedy.) For, the upholders of the freedom of the will (at least) emphasize the command (of God i.e., the moral imperative)......and command good and forbid evil. But they were misled on the question of Divine Omnipotence and thought that the affirmation of a Universal Divine Will and Power ... would rob[18] God of Justice and Wisdom—but they were mistaken. These were then confronted by a number of 'Ulamā' (i.e. of the Orthodoxy), pious men and theologians and Ṣūfīs who affirmed the absolute Power of God... which was so far so good. But they let go the side of command and prohibition (i.e. the moral side)... and became like those associationists (*Mushrikūn*) who (as the Qur'ān informs us) told the Prophet "If God had so willed, we would not have committed *shirk* ... Therefore, although the Mu'tazilah did resemble the Zoroastrians in so far as they affirmed an agent other than God for what they believed to be evil, this other group resembled the Associationists (*Mushrikūn*), who are much worse than the Zoroastrians."

Leaving aside the question of Qadr or determination on which Ash'arī took a wrong stand in order to vindicate the power and majesty of God, he also considered it necessary to deny causation and in doing so

he had the same end in view. If there is no causal nexus between events, he thought, God's power in regard to the world process would become more effective. But in this Ash'arī was mistaken.

Religion and God cannot be vindicated by denying that the course of human life is governed by causes and effects, for causation is one of the agencies through which God manages the world process and the chain of causes and effects is never so rigid as to exclude the operation of the divine will. The complexity of factors which govern man's life is so great that no event can be ascribed to a single cause. All events take place when a number of causes converge together to produce an effect. But this convergence of causes does not take place automatically. There is a super-cause and a super-will through which the convergence comes about and that super-cause is God whose will envelops all other wills.

On this point we can do no better than quote Ibn Qayyim and see how the better minds of the Muslims—even of orthodox Muslims—reacted against the benumbing doctrine of Al-Ash'arī. Ibn Qayyīm writes:

> "When men of wisdom saw that it is not possible to affirm the unity of God except by denying causation, they began to doubt the doctrine of tauḥīd itself and entertain evil thoughts about him who brought it to mankind. But you do not find any book which has put greater emphasis on causes and effects than the Qur'ān. It makes one wonder when one thinks that God is the Creator of the causes and those things which are caused. And the causes and the things caused constitute the manner in which God's will and power operate in the universe. They are subservient to His Ḥikmah (wisdom). If He so desires, He can nullify a cause, as He nullified the power of the fire to burn His

friend (Abraham) and the power of the water to drown a man in respect of Moses. Further, if He so desires, He can place obstacles in the path of (the operation of) causes which would prevent them from producing their effects."

When in spite of the extremism of Al-Ash'arī, his doctrines prevailed in the Muslim world and submerged those of the Mu'tazilah, the question that naturally comes to one's mind is how to explain this phenomenon. The answer is not simple. Ash'arī's doctrines prevailed, firstly, because they reaffirmed the power of God which the tenets of the Mu'tazilah sought to undermine. Secondly, they contained a profound truth, namely, that God's wisdom is inscrutable in the ultimate analysis. The search for ultimate explanation will always remain unrewarding, because there is a mystery at the base of life which cannot be resolved by any rational process. But above all these things, stands the hard and undeniable fact to which Iqbāl has pointed,[33] i.e., "Rationalism was an attempt to measure reality by reason alone; it implied the identity of the spheres of religion and philosophy and strove to express faith in the form of concepts or terms of pure thought."

NOTES

1. Iqbāl, Dr. Sir Muḥammad: *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1962, pp. 149, 50.
2. Iqbāl: *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, Lahore, 1958, p. 61.
3. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 61.
4. Dr. Faẓlur Raḥmān: *Islamic Methodology in History*, Karachi, 1966, p. 100.
5. H. S. Nyberg: *Introduction to Kitāb-al-Intiṣār-al-Radd 'Ala-Ibn-al-Rāwindī* by Abul Ḥusayn b. Uthmān al-Khayyāṭ, Cairo, 1354 A.H., pp. 54, 55.

6. H. S. Nyberg: Ibid., pp. 54, 55.
7. H. S. Nyberg: Ibid., pp. 59, 60.
8. Iqbāl: *Metaphysics in Persia* op. cit., p. 54.
9. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 54.
10. Al-Baghdādī: *Mukhtaṣar-Kitāb-al-Farq Bain-al-Firaq*, Cairo, 1924, p. 104.
11. Al-Bāqilānī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ṭayyabī: *Kitāb-al-Tamhīd*, Beirut, 1957 A.D., p. 253.
12. Iqbāl: *Metaphysics in Persia* op. cit., p. 44.
13. Al-Bāqilānī: op. cit., p. 254.
14. Al-Baghdādī: op. cit. p. 104.
15. Al-Bāqilānī: op. cit., p. 254.
16. Shahrastānī: *Al-Milal wa'l Naḥl*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1910, p. 108.
17. Al-Rāzī: *Mafātiḥ-al-Ghaib*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1954 A.H., p. 432.
18. Shahrastānī: op. cit., Vol. I, p. 135.
19. Ibn Ḥazm: *Al-Fasl Fi-al-Milal Wa'l Ahwa, wa'l Naḥl*, Cairo, 1320 A.H. pp. 126, 27.
20. Al-Ash'arī: *Maqālāt-al-Islamīyeen*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1369 A.H., p. 225.
21. Shahrastānī: *Al-Milal-wa'l Naḥl*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1360 A.H., p. 225.
22. Al-Taftāzānī, Sa'duddīn : *Sharḥ-al-'Aqāid-al-Nasafīyah*, Cairo, N.D. p. 70.
23. Al-Taftāzānī: Ibid., p. 70.
24. Al-Ash'arī, Abī-al-Ḥasan : *Kitāb-al-Ibāna*, Hyderabad Deccan, 1367 (included in *Al-Rasāil-al-Sab'ā fi-al-'Aqāid*), pp. 49, 50.
25. Shahrastānī; *Al-Milal wa'l Naḥl*, Cairo, 1910, pp. 152, 58.
26. Al-Taftāzānī: op. cit., p. 121.
27. Iqbāl: *Metaphysics in Persia*, op. cit., p. 61.
28. Dr. Faẓlur Raḥmān: op. cit., p. 181.
29. Ibn Qayyīm-al-Jauzīyah: *Shafā-al-'Alīl*, Cairo, N.D., p. 125.
30. Ibn Taymīyah: *Rasāil*, Cairo, 1349, part V, p. 126.
31. Ibn Taymīyah: Ibid., p. 126.
32. Ibn Qayyīm, op. cit., p. 261.
33. Iqbāl: *Metaphysics in Persia*, op. cit., p. 54.

CHAPTER III

IQBĀL ON ISLAMIC MYSTICISM

In the sixth chapter of his book, 'The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' Iqbāl maintains that the rise and growth of ascetic Sufism which gradually developed under the influence of a non-Islamic character a purely speculative side, constituted one of the many factors which impelled the jurists of Islam to make the structure of their system as rigorous as possible with the object of preserving the social integrity of Islam. On the other hand, the Ṣūfīs, on their part, also reacted strongly against the verbal quibbles of our early doctors (of law). For example, Iqbāl[1] quotes the case of Sufyān Thaurī who was one of the acutest legal minds of his time but was driven to ascetic Sufism by the dry-as-dust subtleties of contemporary legists.

Iqbāl does not approve of the spirit of radical other-worldliness in Sufism and says that this spirit obscured man's vision of a very important aspect of Islam as a social polity[2]. He is also critical of the speculative side of Sufism because it offered the prospect of unrestrained thought and finally absorbed the best minds of Islam. "The Muslim State was thus left generally in the hands of intellectual mediocrities, and the unthinking masses of Islam, having no personalities of a higher calibre to guide them, found their security only in blindly following the schools."[3]

Iqbāl, however, repudiates the view put forward by the orientalists, like Von Kremer, Dozy, Merx and Nicholson who trace the origin and development of Islamic mysticism to purely non-Islamic sources. "No idea," he says, "can seize a people's soul unless, in some sense, it is the people's own."[4] It is important at this point to discuss the origins of Islamic mysticism, for this has a bearing on its subsequent development and on the moral and political effects that it produced on the general life of the Muslim Community.

Origins of Islamic Mysticism

It is not necessary to go outside the Qur'ān and the Ḥadith literature to look for the frame of mind which produced the ascetic movement in Islam culminating in the birth of Sufism. There are verses in the Qur'ān, which lend themselves to mystic interpretation, if they are not read in conjunction with other equally important verses. For example, the Qur'ān says, "And strike for them the parable of the life of the world as water which We send down from the sky, and vegetation of the earth mingleth with it and then becometh dry twigs that the winds scatter." (XVIII : 46) "Restrain thyself along with those who cry unto their Lord at morn and evening, seeking His countenance; and let not thine eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who followeth his own lust and whose case hath been abandoned." (XVIII : 29). And again, "He is the First and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward; and He is the Knower of all things." (LVII : 3) People with a more than ordinary share of the devotional spirit who preferred contemplation to action could easily have put a construction on these verses suited to their own frame of mind. Even among the companions of the

Prophet there were people whose natural bent of mind inclined them more towards contemplation and introversion. But, the emphasis of such companions could not have constituted a "way of life," independent of the society-building ethos of the community at large.

However, there came a time when this devotional and contemplative attitude gained strength from the socio-political conditions that arose after the assassination of 'Alī. There were two extreme reactions to the political confusion and the declining moral standards that prevailed intermittently down to the period of the later 'Abbasids. The one was activist and the other was based on world-renunciation. The Khawārij represented the first type of reaction and ascetics, like Ḥasan Baṣrī and Wāṣil b. 'Atā', represented the other. But while the activist reaction of the Khawārij failed in its object of overthrowing impious regimes, the ascetic movement continued to gain momentum because it advocated withdrawal from the political field in which the worldly power of the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids was so firmly entrenched that it could not be easily replaced. The failure of the Khawārij and the bloodshed caused by the internecine warfare must have inclined men's minds towards ascetism. In proportion as the moral standards of the people associated with the political regimes declined, persons of a contemplative nature sought refuge in self-denial and self-renunciation as the only method wherewith they could preserve their dignity as individuals and their spirituality as men of religion.

It is at this stage that we find isolationist Ḥadīth coming into circulation, i.e. Ḥadīth which teaches the way of renunciation and withdrawal from public affairs. For example, Muslim contains the following Ḥadīth

which inculcates absolute passivity in the face of social evils and political confusion. "There shall be civil wars wherein a sit-at-home will be better than a standing person, and a standing person shall be better than one who walks, and one who walks will be better than one who runs."[5] Similarly, al-Tirmidhī contains the following Ḥadīth:—"Stick to your home and control your tongue; take what you recognize as good; and mind your own business and have nothing to do with the affairs of the public."[6]

The ascetic movement, however, was not an organised affair. It merely represented the reaction of certain individuals with a contemplative bent of mind to the socio-political conditions of the time. The ascetics did not call themselves Ṣūfīs. It was not till the time of al-Jāḥiz (died 256 A.H./869.)[7] that the appellation of 'Ṣūfī' was used, and the first person to whom this term was applied was Abū Hāshim of Kūfa (died 162 A.H.). Nor did the Muslim ascetics attempt any restatement of the metaphysical foundations of Islam. They merely wished to return to the simplicity of the early days of Islam and to be left undisturbed by political controversies in the pursuit of a life of religious devotion.

Sufism proper with a distinct ethos of its own began somewhat later. The distinguishing characteristics of the Ṣūfīs was their desire for union with God. The ascetics renounced the world for the sake of a better life in the hereafter. The Ṣūfī, on the other hand, sought union with God through renunciation. The ascetic was moved by the fear of God, the Ṣūfī by the thought of divine mercy and grace. Both these aspects are equally stressed by the Qur'ān, but Sufism is exclusively preoccupied with only one of these aspects.

Besides the political unrest of the time which contributed to the growth of Sufism, there were other factors

from which the movement derived its strength. Iqbāl himself has enumerated some of these factors. He says that the sceptical tendencies of Islamic Rationalism which found an early expression in the poems of the blind poet, Bashshār ibn Burd, ultimately necessitated an appeal to a super-intellectual source of knowledge which asserted itself in the Risālah of Al-Qushayrī (986)[8]. Another factor was the bitter theological controversy between the Ash'arities and the advocates of Rationalism "which tended not only to confine religion within the narrow limits of the schools but also stirred up the spirit to rise above all petty sectarian wranglings."[9] Iqbāl also says that the presence of Christianity was a further contributory factor in the growth of Sufism.[10] "It was, however, principally the actual life of the Christian hermit rather than his religious ideas, that exercised the greatest fascination over the minds of early Islamic saints".

Although Iqbāl is justified in his assertion that the doctrines of Christianity did not influence the Ṣūfī movement, it would not be out of place here to mention the fact that the Messianic doctrine of the Mehdī came into Islam through the Ṣūfīs. The beginnings of Sufism are clearly connected with early popular preachers—known by various names—who used Messianism in their sermons to satisfy the politically disillusioned and morally starved masses. In the beginning, the two doctrines—that of the reappearance of Jesus and that of the Mehdī—are quite distinct, since their historical sources are quite different, but later the two figures are brought together.

Sufism further shared with Shī'ism certain common doctrinal elements. For example, the Aqṭāb (poles) of Sufism are characterised by the invisibility, the infallibility and the esoteric knowledge of the Shī'ī Imām who, by this time, was declared to be absent (from public

view). Similarly, the Ṣūfīs employ the method of Ta'wīl (mystical interpretation which differs from the commonly accepted interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses), a practice which is common among the Shī'ah and, in particular, the Ismā'īlīs. The Ṣūfīs, equally with the Ismā'īlīs, stress the *bāṭin* (the esoteric aspect) of things. This shows that there had been some interaction between the Ṣūfī and the Shī'ī movements.

The early ascetics of Islam had followed the path of self-renunciation. The Ṣūfīs went to the extreme of self-annihilation (Fanā), a doctrine which smacks of Buddhist Nirvana. However, the Ṣūfīs claim that it is not total self-annihilation to which they aspire, but the annihilation of the lower self which is followed by the emergence of the higher self.

The main characteristics of Sufism, however, is its ideal of knowledge, the Ma'arifah or gnosis. It is not the intellectual knowledge of God, however, to which the Ṣūfī aspires but mystical union with Him through spiritual ecstasy. In fact, Sufism is opposed to all intellectual modes of knowing and disparages them. In this sense it is anti-intellectual and anti-rational. The author of *Kashf-al-Maḥjūb* says, for example, "you must know that there is a great difference of opinion touching the gnosis and right cognition of God. The Mu'tazilites assert that gnosis is intellectual and that a rational person ('*ākil*) has the possibility of possessing it. This doctrine is disproved by the fact that mad men within Islam, are deemed to have gnosis, and that children, who are not rational, are deemed to have faith. Were the criterion of gnosis an intellectual one, such persons must be without gnosis, while unbelievers could not be charged with infidelity, provided only that they were reasonable beings.

In reality, Man's only guide and enlightener is God. Reason and the proofs adduced by reason are unable to direct any one to the right way.

Ordinary objects of search are found by means of demonstration, but knowledge of God is extraordinary. Therefore, knowledge of Him is attained only by unceasing bewilderment of the reason, and His favour is not procured by any act of human acquisition, but is miraculously revealed to men's hearts."

In spite of their disparagement of reason, the Ṣūfīs had to justify their moral and metaphysical attitudes by means of rational thought. For this purpose, they developed the doctrine of metaphysical monism, called *waḥdat-al-Wajūd* (unity of existence), which had very grave ethical consequences since it entailed the denial of the existence of evil and resulted in a full-fledged determinism that could admit of no free-will. From all these standpoints, i.e., its monistic world view which abolished the distinction between God and man, its denial of the efficacy of the human will and its obliviousness to the fact of evil, Sufism was the antithesis of early Islam, and because the moral attitude engendered by Sufism permeated the masses of the Muslim community, it must be held responsible, along with other contributory factors, for the decline which set in among Muslims after the golden age of Islam had passed away.

Sufi Metaphysics and Ethics

The greatest exponent of Ṣūfī monism was Ibn-al 'Arabī. According to Ibn-al-'Arabī, God is pure existence which at its transcendental level has no essence and no name, and is, therefore, to be described negatively. At the second level, God contemplates and knows Himself. This self-knowledge generates the attributes of Life, Knowledge, Will etc., which also form the con-

tent of His knowledge. Ibn-al-'Arabī regards this realm of the content of the Divine knowledge as an entity in itself. This is the world of essences which constitutes the realm of Divine consciousness. This world is co-eternal with God and does not exist externally (for what exists so far externally is the transcendent Reality) but only in the mind of God. Ibn-al-'Arabī who has a great deal to say about this world, calls it the "inner" of God and God the "exterior" of it. The essences have not "tasted concrete existence." God gives them existence by reflecting them in the mirror of His own existence which is the only external concrete existence that there is. When the essences are thus reflected, they come into existence and become the world.

Ibn-al-'Arabī abrogated the whole idea of contingency, for according to him the world is as necessary as God. Things, on Ibn-al-'Arabī's view, are either necessary or impossible. On the other hand, Ibn Sīnā regards the world as the realm of contingent beings. The existence of the contingent, in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, is not given in its essence but is bestowed by God. How could the contingent, then, ever hope to shed its limitations so completely as to become identical with God—even in mystic experience. "It is for this reason that Ibn Sīnā regards with genuine horror the suggestion that God conceived as soul, exists in everything according to its measure."[13] But this is actually the central idea in Ibn-al-'Arabī's metaphysics which teaches us that the world is but the other side of God. Indeed Ibn-al-'Arabi calls the perfect Man the God-Creature and identifies the Essence of essences with the Ṣūfī essence of Muḥammad.

Another important Ṣūfī thinker who contributed to the monistic system of Ṣūfī beliefs was Sheikh Shihāb-al-

Dīn al-Suhrawardī who was born about the middle of the 12th century. He is known as the "Sheikh-al-Ishrāq," the propounder of the philosophy of illumination. Like, Ibn-al-'Arabī, he denied the distinction between the necessary being and the contingent being. Necessary being, he says, is that pure being which is the most perfect, whereas the being of the individual person is imperfect: it is related to God as the ray of light is related to the sun. When the difference in perfection and imperfection (as between the being of the individual person and God) does exist, no other differentia is needed. The contingency of the individual being consists precisely in its imperfection (and nothing else) and the necessity of God's being means His perfect existence.

Thus, according to al-Suhrawardy, Man is only a lesser God as God is just a greater man. The scale of the continuum of Reality is differentiated only by points of varying degrees and these points represent the eternal realm of Platonic Ideas which he reaffirms in Ḥikmat-al-Ishrāq. But the realm of ideas is not the heterogeneous mass of peripatetic essences but a homogeneous substance—Light in which the Ideas appear as so many glittering centres of radiation.

Self-awareness is regarded by al-Suhrawardy as the constitutive element of being. The Self is nothing but self-manifestation and self-luminosity. Al-Suhrawardy claims that only by taking Light to be the real nature of being and not merely immateriality—as the philosophers had done—can one establish a spiritually self-conscious ego. Al-Suhrawardy, thus, erects a pantheism of self-luminous, self-reflecting, self-present existences varying in degrees of intensity. The whole of God is existence and the whole of existence is God.

We see how this Ṣūfī monism overlooks the differences, the conflicts and the moral tensions that exist in

the world, and which can be ignored only at great peril to the social integrity of the *Muslim community*. It is a deterministic structure of the universe into which the Ṣūfī theosophs want us to fit ourselves. Doubtless the Ṣūfī thought produced a certain catholicity of outlook, but it also created indifference to social conditions and to the preservation of the socio-political integrity of Islam, for the Ṣūfī was exclusively preoccupied with the spiritual progress of the individual and had no thought to spare for the moral and material progress of the society in which he lived, as if the individual could escape and flout his social destiny.

Reaction

The reaction against Sufism was led, in the first instance, by Ibn-Taymīyah. In a small treatise entitled, "Ahl-al-Ṣuffah,"[13] Ibn-Taymīyah undertakes a refutation of the Ṣūfī thesis that the companions of the Prophet who lived in Ṣuffah (adjacent to the Prophet's mosque at Medinah) had anything in common with the Ṣūfīs of the later times. He says that when the Prophet migrated to Medinah, only a few migrants from Mecca joined him but later on there was constant addition to this small group of emigrants, so that the Helpers could not provide accommodation to the large stream of emigrants. Therefore, the Prophet ordered them to use the Ṣuffah of the mosque at Medinah for residential purposes. But it is historically wrong to claim that the "people of Ṣuffah" were a permanent body of residents. On the other hand, there was a constant influx and efflux going on. New emigrants came in to reside at Ṣuffah, while those who already lived there left the Ṣuffah, if they could find accommodation for themselves and their families. Again, the companions of the Prophet who lived at Ṣuffah made their own living, if they

could. Only those who could make no living were helped by the Prophet. Therefore, there was no person among the *Ahl-al-Ṣuffah* who had taken to voluntary poverty. If some of them did not make any living, it was not by choice that they did so but by the compulsion of circumstances. Ibn Taymīyah further refutes the theory that the *Ahl-al-Ṣuffah* abstained from warfare. He says that most of them joined the campaigns undertaken by the Prophet and none of them fought against the Muslims on the side of the disbelievers. He also repudiates the view expressed by the Ṣūfīs that the *Ahl-al-Suffah* were in any way considered superior in rank to other companions of the Prophet. He says that the ten companions of the Prophet who were promised rewards in the hereafter, as expressly stated in the Qur'ān, were definitely more exalted in rank. Similarly, the verse of the Holy Qur'ān, "Restrain thyself along with those who cry unto their Lord at morn and evening, seeking His countenance; and let not thine eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp of the life of this world." (XVIII : 29) is of general application and does not apply, Ibn Taymīyah forcefully asserts, specifically to the people living at Ṣuffah.

Ibn-Taymīyah's criticism of Ṣūfī metaphysics is directed against the doctrines of Union (*Ittiḥād*) and incarnation (*Ḥulūl*). He says[14] that the doctrine of incarnation is associated with many Ṣūfīs of later times and that is the reason why some of the leaders of Sufism repudiated it. For example, Junaid said: *Tauḥid* consists in making a distinction between the eternal and the originated. But Ibn-al-'Arabī rejected this stand and said that Junaid and his associates died without knowing the real nature of *Tauḥid* for, according to Ibn-al-'Arabī, *Tauḥīd* consists in not making a distinction between God and His creatures. He further maintained that no one

can establish a distinction between the eternal and the originated unless he himself belonged to neither category.

Commenting on the theory put forward by Ibn-al-'Arabī, Ibn Taymīyah says that his theory is based on two presuppositions. Firstly[15], that the non-existent is an entity. This doctrine was held by many of the Mu'tazilah and the extremists among the Shī'ah. Secondly, that the existence of the originated and created things is identical with the existence of the Creator. This doctrine is shared by Ibn-al-'Arabī with other *Ittiḥādiyah* (those who believe in unity), but Ibn-al-'Arabī is nearer to Islam by comparison with them, because he makes a distinction between Ẓāhir, i.e., that which manifests itself (God) and the Maẓāhir (phenomena).

However, in spite of this, the theory of Ibn-al-'Arabī is unacceptable, because, says Ibn-Taymīyah, according to Ibn-al-'Arabī the subsisting essences (*'Ayān Thābitah*) exist in their own right prior to their actual existence as phenomena. Thus, they do not stand in need of God. Rather, God stands in need of them in order to confer existence on them[16]. Now, according to the Qur'ān, God is independent of the world. He stands in need of nothing, but every thing else stands in need of Him. Therefore, Ibn-al-'Arabī's metaphysical theory conflicts with the fundamentals of religion.

Ibn Taymīyah further criticises[17] Ibn-al-'Arabī for making God's knowledge of His creatures dependent on His knowledge of the subsisting essences (in their state of non-existence). God in Himself knows nothing about His creatures, on Ibn-al-'Arabī's theory. All such knowledge is derived from His knowledge of the essences. Again, His knowledge of the subsisting essences (in the

state of non-existence) prevents Him from doing anything contrary to His knowledge. This leads to a rigorous determinism and destroys God's freedom of will, because everything is already given in the essences. God has only to make them manifest by conferring existence on them. Things cannot be different from what is already contained in their essences. Ibn-Taymīyah further quotes Ibn-al-'Arabī's[13] dictum that God rarefied Himself and called Himself *Ḥaq* (God) in this state. He, then, condensed Himself and called Himself *creation* (in this state). But this is untenable, "because if that which is rarefied is identical with that which has been condensed, then God is the world and there has been neither rarefaction nor condensation but if that which is rarefied is different from that which has been condensed, then the identity of God and His creation cannot be affirmed and this is the real truth."

Similarly, Ibn-Taymīyah criticises Ibn-al-'Arabī for his dictum that the exterior of God is His creation, while the interior of God is He Himself. But this presupposes that there are two entities, one of which is His exterior and the other His interior, which is not true, because, says Ibn-Taymīyah[19], the distinction between existence and essence is totally unreal.

But Ibn Taymīyah's most trenchant criticism against the Ṣūfīs is directed against their determinism and denial of free-will in man. He says that the Ṣūfīs waver between free-will and determinism opting neither for the one nor for the other[20]. "As some of the 'Ulema have remarked, you are a believer in free-will in matters of obedience (that is, when you carry out the divine commands), but when you commit a sin you turn into a determinist." If determinism were true, says Ibn Taymīyah (as the Ṣūfīs maintain) then the determinist

should not seek the help of the law in case he is wronged. If the wrong-doer destroys his property or inflicts physical injuries on him or brings him to dishonour, the determinist should do nothing against the wrong-doer and let him live in peace. But, adds Ibn Taimīyah, this is impossible as it runs counter to human nature[21].

A far deeper criticism of Ṣūfī metaphysics came from Sheikh Aḥmed Sirhindī. Ibn-al-'Arabī held that the multiplicity of the attributes, which constitute the divine mind, was the furniture of the universe. The world, in fact, was nothing but the divine attributes reflected in the only external existence. These divine attributes, Ibn 'Arabī calls the essences of the contingents. But Sheikh Aḥmed claims that when attributes come to exist in a multiple manner in the mind of God, they generate their own opposites. Thus, knowledge stands over against an antithesis called ignorance, power is opposed by its contradictory, viz., powerlessness, and so on. The sum-total of these attributes and their specific antitheses constitute both the Divine consciousness and the material of the universe. The essences of the contingents are really the opposites of the Divine attributes, or non-being. But in these opposites or antitheses the positive attributes cast their reflections. The essences of the contingents are thus these non-beings plus the reflections that come to inhere in them of the positive attributes.

Now since one of the perfections of God is external existence, the contingents by receiving an affluence of this perfection cease to be mere essences in the Divine Mind and come to exist externally. This is creation. When Ibn-al-'Arabī talks of reflection, he makes the world only an attenuated carbon copy of God. But, according to Sheikh Aḥmed Sirhindī, "the world *exists*

externally not only to God's mind but also to His Being. It is an imperfect Being with only a derivative existence, but it is on its own, with its own constitution, its own capacities and destiny."[22]

The chief concern of Sheikh Sirhindī is to bring into focus the moral dualism between God and the World and metaphysics is used as means to this end. The essence of the world is non-being and evil which cannot be predicated of God. But the world as it actually exists is not pure evil because the reflections of the Divine are also its constitutive elements. These reflections, however, are reflections of God and cannot, as such, be predicated of God. The error of Ibn-al-'Arabī and of the majority of the Ṣūfis who followed him consists in (*a*) not recognizing the fundamental evil in the world and (*b*) calling it a reflection of God but identifying the reflection with the original. A reflection or a shadow can only metaphysically be said to be that of which it is a reflection or a shadow. "A literal identification is nothing but an intellectual confusion and a religious disaster.[29]"

Sufism and the Modern World

We have discussed the speculative philosophy developed by the Ṣūfis and also noted the reaction it produced among the Muslim thinkers like Ibn-Taymiyah and Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī. It is evident that Ṣūfī speculative thought did not appeal to those minds which were interested in the task of reconstructing Muslim society along the lines envisaged by the Qur'ān and the Prophet of Islam. Indeed, it is one of the basic deficiencies of Sufism that it takes society for granted as it finds it and then attempts to reform the individuals within the existing framework of society. That the task of the

individual's reformation and self-improvement is necessary we admit, for we cannot attempt to reconstruct society on *Islamic lines* without individuals who are not only Muslims but good Muslims too. But the difficulty is that the Ṣūfī conception of a good Muslim differs in many respects from the Qur'ānic concept of a good Muslim and the techniques adopted by Sufism are not conducive to the shaping of individual lives in a manner that could be of any help in the reconstruction of Muslim society. The Qur'ānic concept of a good Muslim is not merely that of an individual who possesses religious piety in the generally accepted sense of the word, but of one who is *actively* virtuous, one who is ready to sacrifice his wealth and, if need be, his life in the cause of faith. This means that he should be actively interested not merely in his own self-improvement but also in the destiny of Islam as a movement and in the welfare, moral and material, of those who form part of the movement. This is a much broader concept of goodness than that posited by Sufism which seeks to produce good men but not good citizens. It is true that you cannot be a good citizen without being a good man, but the reverse is also equally true. A type of personality which is mainly preoccupied with its own spiritual progress and regards all material possessions as superfluous, if not wholly evil, which is indifferent to political and economic trends and which does not prepare itself for participation in the task of social reconstruction, is hardly the type of personality that can be of much value in the critical times through which we are passing.

It may be objected to this, that today we are not threatened by too much self-renunciation or too much other-worldliness. On the contrary, the threat to our social and spiritual integrity comes from a total lack of self-renunciation and from too much worldliness.

Grosser forms of materialism have invaded us in the shape of Communism, Existentialism, and other competing philosophies of life. The indifference to our social and spiritual well-being comes not from Sufism or any form of perverted religion, but from the hedonism inherent in modern culture which regards material possessions and sensuous pleasures as the end of life. This is all very true. But one excess cannot be corrected by another. Certainly we need today a greater devotion to the things of the spirit or higher values, nor is there any doubt that without a certain degree of self-renunciation nothing high can be achieved in the realm of intellect or in the field of politics. It is in this sense that self-imposed poverty becomes necessary, namely, the *Faqr* required by the Ṣūfīs. It is also true that in a world in which the race for material prosperity and social prestige has become the all-absorbing concern of life, there is need for a certain amount of retirement and devotional exercises, so as to produce a greater degree of God-Consciousness. Similarly, in a society where material progress is the only yardstick for the measurement of social worth, there is a greater need of individual effort being directed towards moral self-improvement. This much of Sufism we do require, if it can be so called. But what we do not require today is the spirit of total withdrawal from the affairs of the world and a purely individual morality or absolute unconcern with matters which vitally affect our destiny as a distinct political society. The Prophet of Islam withdrew himself to the cave of Hira only to return with redoubled energy and change the society and the world around him. He never went back to the cave afterwards. The society and the world of today requires no less radical changes. For this purpose we need individuals who can combine their own moral self-improvement with the enthusiasm

and energy that should characterise those who attempt a radical social reconstruction. All retirement, all devotional exercises, all self-renunciation and all attempts to forego worldly possessions should be directed to this supreme task. If not, they will achieve nothing. Sufism in the sense of individual efforts to reform and improve oneself morally and spiritually is still relevant to the times in which we live. But as an organised and formal affair with its special techniques, it is a spent force that will never come into its own again.

In one of his lectures Iqbāl has stressed the dangers of over-organisation and expressed himself in favour of rearing self-concentrated individuals. "In an over-organised society," he writes,[24] "the individual is altogether crushed out of existence. He gains the whole world of social thought around him but loses his own soul...The only effective power, therefore, that counteracts the forces of decay in a people is the rearing of self-concentrated individuals. Such individuals alone reveal the depth of life. They disclose new standards in the light of which we begin to see that our environment is not wholly inviolable and requires revision. The tendency to over-organisation by a false reverence of the past as manifested in the legists of Islam in the thirteenth century and later, was contrary to the inner impulse of Islam and consequently invoked the powerful reaction of Ibn Taymīyah."

If we wish to understand what Iqbāl means by self-concentrated individuals, we shall have to study his poetry where he often speaks of Mard-e-Qalandar, Mard-e-Momin and Mard-e-Ḥur and builds up the image of a personality that resembles the Ṣūfis in some respects but differs from them in other respects. He is not in favour

of formal and traditional Sufism, because he thinks that the spark of life has gone out of it.

اب حجرہ صوفی میں وہ فقر نہیں باقی
خون دل شیراں ہو جس فقر کی دستاویز

"Nothing of Faqr (voluntary poverty) remains in the secluded room of the Ṣūfī whose documentary evidence is the blood that courses in the hearts of lion-hearted people."[25]

اٹھا میں مدرسہ و خانقاہ سے غمناک
نہ زندگی نہ محبت نہ معرفت نہ نگاہ

"I rose from the Madrasah (of the 'Ulema') and the monastery (of the Ṣūfīs) saddened by the experience that there is neither life, nor love, nor gnosis, nor vision in these places."[26]

رہا نہ حلقہ صوفی میں سوز مشتاق
فسانہ ہائے کرامات رہ گئے باقی

"Nothing of the fire of intense desire remains in the circle of the Ṣūfīs. Only stories of their miracles have survived."[27]

Nevertheless, some of the qualities which characterised our great Ṣūfīs form the ingredients of a character which Iqbāl holds up as a model before his coreligionists. For example, he says :—

علاج آتش رومی کے سوز میں ہے ترا
تری خرد پہ ہے غالب فرنگیوں کا فسوں

"The warmth of Rūmī's fire constitutes thy remedy. Thy reason has been waylaid by the magic of western-ers."[28]

Like the Ṣūfīs, Iqbāl stressed the fact that formal teaching is as nothing compared to the living contact of a dynamic personality, which has a transforming effect on character:—

صحبت از علم کتابی خوش تر است
صحبت مردان حر آدم گر است

"Company (of living personalities) is better than the knowledge obtained from books. The company of free men is creative of fresh personalities."[39]

Like the Ṣūfīs, again, Iqbāl holds up the ideal of voluntary poverty and disparages academic learning by comparison with the vision imparted to the disciples by a spiritual teacher :—

علم کا مقصود ہے پاکیٔ عقل و خرد
فقر کا مقصود ہے عفت قلب و نگاہ

"Knowledge aims at the purification of reason and intellect, but Faqr (voluntary poverty) aims at the purification of the heart and the sight."[30]

But to these qualities of character which are shared by the Ṣūfīs, are superadded higher qualities which were exemplified by the Prophet and his companions, who differed in some fundamental respects from the Ṣūfīs. For example, Iqbāl often refers to the revolutionary character of their personality, in the political as well as the social sense of the word:—

نہ ایراں میں رہے باقی نہ توراں میں رہے باقی
وہ بندے فقر تھا جن کا ہلاک قیصر و کسریٰ

"Neither in Iran nor in Turan, survive those creatures of God whose Faqr was destructive of the empire of Caesars and Chosroes."[31]

The reference clearly is to the early companions of the Prophet, who destroyed the Byzantine and the Persian empires, despite their poor living conditions.

Similarly, Iqbāl says:—

مہر و مہ و انجم کا محاسب ہے قلندر
ایام کا مرکب نہیں راکب ہے قلندر

"The Qalandar calls to account the moon and the stars. He is not ridden by the Time, rather he rides over the Time."[32]

This plainly means that Iqbāl wants a character-pattern which instead of adjusting itself to the exigencies of the times, changes the direction of history and overcomes it by the sheer force of will and insight.

Now, it is clear that our Ṣūfīs did not fulfil any of the requirements laid down by Iqbāl. They overthrew no kingdom. In fact they accepted as inevitable the political system within which they had to work, and were totally indifferent to the political and social conditions of their times. Similarly, they never attempted to turn the direction of history and did not take up the challenge of their times. In all these respects, Iqbāl goes back to the Prophet and his companions for building up his ideal personality. Iqbāl likewise speaks of the lofty aims which mark out a dynamic personality from men of lesser stature:—

خاکی و نوری نہاد بندہ مولا صفات
ہر دو جہان سے غنی اس کا دل بے نیاز
اس کی امیدین قلیل اس کے مقاصد جلیل
اس کی ادا دلفریب اس کی نگہ دلنواز

"Created of dust, but having the effulgence of light, this creature who resembles the Creator in his qualities is uninterested in (the possessions of) either world. His (worldly) expectations are few, but his aims are lofty, his manners attractive and his eyes charming."[33]

This is the kind of self-concentrated individual on whom Iqbāl pins his hopes. It is clear that he is not anxious to revive Sufism, though he would like to preserve some of the character traits produced by the Ṣūfī movement. But unless other qualities are added to these character-traits, qualities of a more virile, active and dynamic nature, the traditional Ṣūfī character-pattern is no answer to the challenge of modernism.

NOTES

1. Iqbāl: *Reconstruction*, op. cit., p. 150.
2. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 150.
3. Iqbāl: Ibid., pp. 150, 151.
4. Iqbāl: *Metaphysics in Persia*, op. cit., p. 176.
5. *Mishkāt-al-Maṣābīh*, Delhi, 1932, p. 462.
6. Ibid., p. 464.
7. Khalīl-al-Jarr and Hana al-Fakhurī: *Tārikh-al-Falsafat-'Arabiyah*, Vol. I, Beirut, N.D., p. 293.
8. Iqbāl: *Metaphysics in Persia*, op. cit., p. 79.
9. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 79.
10. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 80.
11. Al-Hujwirī: *The Kashf-al-Mahjūb*. English translation by R. A. Nicholson, London, 1922, p. 268.
12. Dr. Fazlurrahmān: *Introduction to Sirhindi's letters* (Maktūbāt). Chapter I, published by Iqbāl Academy, Karachi, 1968.
13. Ibn Taymīyah: *Rasā'il Wal Fatāwā Sheikh-al-Islām*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1341 A.H. p. 25 to p. 60,
14. Ibn Taymīyah: *Rasā'il*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1341 A.H., p. 71.
15. Ibn Taymīyah: *Rasā'il Wal Fatāwā*; Vol. I, op. cit., p. 175.
16. Ibn Taymīyah: Ibid., p. 67,
17. Ibn Taymīyah: Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 50.
18. Ibn Taymīyah: *Rasā'il*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1341 A.H., p. 67.
19. Ibn Taymīyah: Ibid., 77.
20. Ibn Taymīyah: Ibid., pp. 72, 73.
21. Ibn Taymīyah: Ibid., pp. 89, 90.
22. Dr. Fazlurrahmān: *Introduction to Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindī's letters*, op. cit.
23. Dr. Fazlurrahmān: Ibid.
24. Iqbāl: *Reconstruction*, op. cit., p. 151.
25. Iqbāl: *Bāl-e-Jibrīl*, Lahore, 1959, p. 42.
26. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 70.
27. Iqbal: Ibid., p. 95.
28. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 44.
29. Iqbāl: *Mathnavi Pas Ceh Bayad Kard*, Lahore, N.D. p. 54.
30. Iqbāl: *Bāl-e-Jibrīl*, Lahore, 1959, p. 110.
31. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 38.
32. Iqbāl: *Zarb-e-Kaleem*, Lahore, 1959, p. 36.
33. Iqbāl: *Bal-e-Jibrīl*, 1959.

Chapter IV

IQBĀL ON ISLAMIC DEMOCRACY

Iqbāl's political philosophy has been grossly misinterpreted. By some he has been held up as the champion of Fascist dictatorship, others have tried to discover in his writings leanings towards Communism. Very few have tried to view as a whole the political ideas of Iqbāl which lie scattered in his writings and therefrom to build up a consistent political theory which might fit in with the general framework of his philosophical ideas. It is often overlooked by the critics as well as the admirers of Iqbāl that a man's political ideas cannot be isolated from the general system of his thought, because both spring from the depths of his personality, which is a unified whole.

Tauhid as basis of Islamic Polity

According to Iqbāl, Islam as a Polity seeks to give practical expression to the principle of Tauḥīd. "It demands loyalty to God, not to thrones. And since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, loyalty to God virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature."[1] Iqbāl thus declares himself against all forms of state-worship and aligns himself with those who regard the state as an agency whose main purpose is to create the conditions necessary for the fuller development of human individuality. The individualistic strain in Iqbāl also comes out in his remark[2] that Islam as a system of

emotional unification recognises the worth of the individual as such, and rejects blood-relationship as a basis of human unity. In other words, Islam does not approve of a political organisation based on territorial nationalism. This is quite natural, because if the Islamic polity is an objectification of the principle of Tauḥīd, as Iqbāl says, it must seek to demolish rather than strengthen the walls which divide one portion of humanity from another. Iqbāl takes up the same theme in his poem, "The Mysteries of Selflessness", where he says:—[3]

Our Master, fleeing from his fatherland,
Resolved the knot of Muslim nationhood.
His wisdom founded one community,
The world its parish.

These, then, are the two dominant ideas of Iqbāl's political philosophy, namely, his belief in the worth of the individual and his opposition to all forms of nationalism. But both have a common source in the principle of Tauḥīd (unity of God), because Tauḥīd leads us to offer our final and definitive allegiance to God and to the laws of God as revealed to His Prophet, making all other loyalties subservient to this primary loyalty and at the same time causes us to oppose all artificial divisions between one set of human beings and another, whether these divisions are based on geography, race or social and economic status.

Iqbal's Individualism

Iqbāl, far from leaning towards totalitarianism, is fearful of over-organisation tending, as it does, to kill the growth of individual human personality. He criticises even the early doctors of Islamic law for over-valuing social order at the expense of individual freedom. "Their leading idea", writes Iqbāl,[4] "was social order and there is no doubt they were partly right, because

organisation does to a certain extent counteract the forces of decay. But they did not see and our modern 'ulamā' do not see that the ultimate fate of a people does not depend so much on organisation as on the worth and power of individual men. In an over-organised society the individual is altogether crushed out of existence. He gains the whole world around him and loses his own soul". In the same passage,[5] he says that the only effective power that counteracts the forces of decay in a people is the rearing of self-concentrated individuals. Such individuals alone, he adds, reveal the depths of life. They disclose new standards in the light of which we begin to see that our environment is not wholly inviolable and requires revision. Indeed, individuality is so central to the philosophy of Iqbāl that he even conceives of God as an individual, unique and peerless.[6] God, conceived of as some vast, vague and pervasive element, does not appeal to Iqbāl and for this very reason he is opposed to Pantheism which destroys God's individuality.

In support of his argument that God is an individual Iqbāl says that the Qur'ān gives Him the proper name of Allah which shows that the Qur'ān emphasises the individuality of the ultimate Ego. He further quotes the Qur'ānic verse in which God is described as the light of the Heavens and the earth. He says that the opening sentence of the verse gives the impression of an escape from the individualistic conception of God. But when we follow the metaphor of light in the rest of the verse, it gives just the opposite impression. The development of the metaphor,[7] he adds, is meant rather to exclude the suggestion of a formless cosmic element by centralising the light in a flame which is further individualized by its encasement in a glass.

We are, therefore, led to the conclusion that there is something divine in the uniqueness of human individuality. It is indeed the most precious gift of God and the highest agency for human development and betterment. Men can contribute to social welfare only in so far as they differ from and complement each other. It is true that the differences in human beings lead sometimes to conflicts, but if these conflicts can be kept within bounds, they lead to progress and not to decay. In any case, Iqbāl has the utmost respect for the unique individual. He goes so far as to claim that[8] "the kingdom of God on earth means the democracy of more or less unique individuals, presided over by the most unique individual on the earth".

It may be noted here that while Iqbāl is right in stressing the worth of human individuality against the dangers inherent in social over-organisation, individuality must submit itself to some discipline in order to be of value to society. If the external organisation of society fails to satisfy the individual, he should submit to the discipline of his own enlightened self in order to be able to act in a responsible manner. Even in revolting against his society, the individual has to identify himself with its more permanent and lasting interests. Otherwise, he cannot live meaningfully. It is impossible to think of an individual who tears himself completely apart from his society, because he can work for his ideals and realise them only by making an impact on the community of which he is a member. If he feels that his community is not going in the right direction or is likely to harm the interests of the larger humanity, he should try to set it right. A total breach with society is justified only when the individual has lost faith in his community and believes that it is inherently incapable of reform. In relation to those people who revolt against society and

assert their individuality because their selfish desires and private interests prompt them to do so, the external organisation of society, however artificial and irrational, is a powerful safeguard which prevents the growth of irresponsible individuality. Unless the revolt against society is creative and responsible, it will be like the revolt of those who believe in nudism or the cult of murder.

Deeper Sources of Iqbal's Individualism

Iqbāl's respect for the individual and his realisation of the individual's worth is the logical corollary of his philosophy of the self or *khudī*. He has given the word 'khudī' a new connotation and invested it with a new meaning. In the introduction to his poem 'Asrār-e-Khudī', Iqbāl warns his readers not to take the word 'khudī' in the generally understood sense of pride, because he has used the word to denote self-awaremess, or self-determination. More light on the meaning of this word is shed by his poem 'Sāqī-Nāmah'[10] in which he says that for a person who keeps guard over his khudī (self), the bread which deprives him of his self-respect is no better than poison. Only that bread is auspicious for him which enables him to walk with his head high. Similarly, there is only one prostration which is permissible for him, and it is that which ends in the total prohibition of all other prostrations. Khudī, he says, is like a tiger of which the entire world, and the whole of the earth and the skies are preys. There are other worlds waiting to be conquered by man. Taken together, these statements show that Iqbāl wants the individual to have respect for himself, to shed all fear of earthly authority and to be filled with high aims which may lead to his self-fulfilment. If the individual can come up to these standards, he may be said to have a 'khudī'.

Further explanation of his concept of the self is given by Iqbāl himself in a long letter which he wrote to Nicholson.[11] In this letter he refers to the opinion expressed by Prof. Bradley that the test of reality is all-inclusiveness and since all finiteness is infected with relativity, it follows that the latter is a mere illusion. Iqbāl refutes this argument and declares that all life is individual; there is no such thing as a universal life. God Himself is an individual. The universe, as Dr. McTaggert says, is an association of individuals. Nor are the members of the association fixed; new members are ever coming to birth to cooperate in the great task, because the universe is not a completed act: it is still in the course of formation.

The moral and religious ideal of man, adds Iqbāl, is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique. The Prophet said, 'create in yourselves the attributes of God'. Thus man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique individual. Life itself, Iqbāl declares, is individual. Its highest form, so far, is the Ego (khudī) in which the individual becomes a self-contained exclusive centre. Since the essence of life is a forward assimilative movement, it is continually engaged in the creation of desires and ideals. For the purposes of its preservation and expansion, it has invented or developed out of itself certain instruments, e.g., senses, intellect, etc. which help in assimilating obstructions. The greatest obstacle in the way of life is matter, Nature. Yet Nature is not evil, since it enables the inner powers of life to unfold themselves.

Iqbāl does not allow the Ego to go its own way. He has prescribed a scheme of education so that the self-development and self-fulfilment of the Ego may take

place along desirable lines. The Ego, he says, is fortified by love, the highest form of which is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realise them. Love individualises the lover as well as the beloved. As love fortifies the Ego, dependence (*su'āl*) weakens it. All that is achieved without personal effort comes under *su'āl*. Thus, in order to fortify the Ego, we should cultivate love, i.e., the power of assimilative action, and avoid all forms of "asking", i.e., inaction. The Ego, Iqbāl goes on to explain, in its movement towards uniqueness has to pass through three stages, namely, obedience to law, self-control and Divine vicegerency. This last is the highest stage of human development on earth. The nā'ib[12] (vicegerent) is the vicegerent of God on earth. He is the completest Ego, the acme of life both in mind and body: in him the discord of our mental life becomes a harmony.

The Individual and the Community

Iqbāl's individualism is evenly matched by his high regard for the Community. The Community has an enduring life, while individuals are born[13] and perish. It is only through the community that one individual can associate with other individuals and such association is necessary for the growth of his individuality. As Prof. Arberry says,[14] "He was not interested merely in the individual and his self-realization; he was equally concerned with the evolution of an ideal society or community as he preferred to call it. It is only as a member of this community that the individual, by the twin principles of conflict and concord is able to express himself fully and ideally; it is only as an association of self-affirming individuals that the community can come into being and perfect itself. Iqbāl thus escapes from libertarianism by limiting the individual's freedom, making him a

member of a homogeneous community and from totalitarianism by limiting the community's authority, making it a challenge and not an insurmountable obstacle to the individual's self-realization".

In the 'Rumūz-e-Bekhudī', Iqbāl quotes a Ḥadith from the Prophet which says that Satan always keeps himself at a distance from the congregation of Muslims. He says that the individual and the community are a mirror to each other. The individual gains respectability from society, while society receives its organisation from the (unity of the) individuals. The community joins together the past and the future and its life is as unlimited as Eternity itself. The individual by himself is heedless of high purposes and is apt to dissipate his strength. It is the community which imposes discipline on him and teaches him to be as soft as the gentle breeze.

It will be seen that in the opinion of Iqbāl, the individual and the community are necessary to each other. Without individuals imbued with high ideals and gifted with vision, society would stagnate: without society, the individual cannot discipline himself and realize the best that is in him.

Principle of Leadership

Iqbāl eulogises greatness wherever he finds it. He has praised Mussolini, Lenin, Karl Marx and Nietzsche in spite of the fact that he strongly disagrees with all of them. This is because he likes dynamism, virility and strength of will. His own ideal of greatness is, however, different. The qualities which he ascribes to *Mard-e-Momin*, *Mard-e-Qalandar* and *Mard-e-Ḥur* are expressive of his idea of greatness. Iqbāl is, indeed, so much enamoured of greatness that he justifies the sufferings inflicted by nature in order to achieve its goal of creating beauty of a high order both in the realms of physical

and spiritual life. For example, in 'Asrār-e-Khudī' he says:—[15]

"For the sake of a single rose it destroys a hundred
gardens
And makes a hundred lamentations in quest of a
single melody
For one sky it produces a hundred new moons,
And for one word a hundred discourses
The excuse for this wastefulness and cruelty
Is the shaping and perfecting of spiritual beauty."

And again,

"Its flames burned a hundred Abrahams,
That the lamp of one Muhammad be lighted".

Iqbāl further holds that greatness is achieved by the imitation of the great. For example, in 'Asrār-e-Khudī' he has expressed the opinion:—

کیفیتہا خیزد از صہبائے عشق
ہست ہم تقلید از اسمائے عشق
کامل بسطام در تقلید فرد
اجتناب از خوردن خربوزہ کرد
عاشقی محکم شود از تقلید یار
تاکمند تو شود یزدان شکار

"States (of consciousness) arise from the wine of love. Imitation is also one of the attributes of love. The saint of Bisṭām who was perfect in imitation gave up eating water-melon. (Because he did not know how the Prophet of Islam ate this fruit). Love is strengthened by the imitation of the beloved, that God Himself might become thy prey".

All this really amounts to a desire on Iqbāl's part that the Community should be guided by a strong and virile leadership which should draw its inspiration from the Prophet of Islam and model itself on his Sunnah in the widest sense of the word. His plea for strong leadership is in no sense an argument for dictatorship, because

even a democracy needs strong leaders. Unfortunately, for certain historical reasons, democracy has come to be associated with weak leadership and it is taken for granted that the rise of a great and strong leader must inevitably throw up a dictatorial regime. But this is not true. Democracy has a stronger claim on leaders who possess dynamism, virility and intellectual breadth of vision, because only in a democratic framework, such leaders can mutually reconcile their differences and pay due respect to one another. In a dictatorship one great man becomes so powerful that he is most unlikely to permit men of equal calibre to work by his side, for fear that they might win the admiration of the people and throw him out. The democratic structure of government affords greater scope for men of high calibre to work together in mutual cooperation for the common good.

Some support is lent to the misunderstanding that Iqbāl is opposed to a democratic form of government by the following verses contained in the Payam-e-Mashriq:

متاع معنی بیگانہ از دون فطرتان جوئی
زموران شوخی طبع سلیمانے نمی آید
گریز از طرز جمہوری غلامے پختہ کارے شو
کہ از مغز دو صد خر فکر انسانے نمی آید

"Do you expect that people of a low nature will disclose a new wealth of meaning. The ants cannot produce a genius like that of Solomon. Flee from the democratic way of life, become the slave of an experienced man because the minds of two hundred donkeys cannot produce the thought of one human being".

A deeper study of these verses will show that Iqbāl is not so much opposed to the democratic form of government as to the rule of a few untalented persons. Whenever a democracy comes to be governed by persons of a low calibre, who have neither intellect nor vision,

it is likely to bring disaster to the people. But this is no argument against democracy for the same thing might happen in any other form of government. If untalented people come to occupy the highest positions in a democracy there must be something wrong with the form and structure of democracy and to that extent it needs to be reformed. But to argue that the entire democratic structure should be subverted and replaced by dictatorship would be to lose sight of the fact that only within a democratic form of government can fresh leadership arise and replace a worn out leadership by peaceful means. In a dictatorship it is impossible to change the leaders who have failed to justify the confidence reposed in them without resorting to bloodshed. Moreover, democracy alone can ensure that the talent, potential and actual, found in the community will receive necessary encouragement and be given the necessary opportunity to come forward in the political field. Great leaders have often come up from the masses below and it is one of the strongest points in favour of democracy that it enables the masses by participation in the processes of the government to throw up fresh leadership.

The impression that Iqbāl disparages the masses, which one might get from the verses quoted above, should be dispelled by the following remarks made on the subject of Muslim democracy:—[16]

"The Democracy of Europe—overshadowed by socialistic agitation and anarchical fear—originated mainly in the economic regeneration of European societies. Nietzsche, however, abhors this 'rule of the herd', and hopeless of the plebian, he bases all higher culture on the cultivation and growth of an Aristocracy of supermen. But is the plebian so absolutely hopeless? The Democracy of Islam did not grow out of the extension of economic opportunity, it is a spiritual principle based on

the assumption that every human being is a centre of latent power the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character. Out of the plebian material, Islam has formed men of the noblest type of life and power. Is not, then, the Democracy of early Islam an experimental refutation of the ideas of Nietzsche"?

This passage makes it clear that Iqbāl does not despise the common man and that his concept of the Mard-e-Momin or Mard-e-Qalandar has nothing to do with Nietzsche's idea of the Superman. What he wants is that the Community should be able to benefit by the guidance of great men who are also good men in the Islamic sense of the word. In other words, he would like to have effective leadership, a leadership that can serve as a model to the mass of people, that can inspire them to heroic action. There is nothing incompatible with democracy in the idea of such leadership. The fact that Iqbāl does not want a superman who can overshadow every one else and by whose side all others will look like pygmies is amply borne out by his remark:

ہوئی جس کی خودی پہلے نمودار
وہی مہدی وہی آخر زمانی

"He is the real Mehdī and he is the person who belongs to the Last Days, whose 'khudī' (self) comes out first".

This means that there can be many Mehdis or supermen in a community, for it is possible that a number of persons may discover their 'self' or 'soul' at almost the same time. Therefore, Iqbāl's idea of the Great Man, the Mard-e-Momin or Mard-e-Qalandar is not the undemocratic idea of a single superman who sums up all possible greatness in himself and leads the community unopposed, almost in the manner of a dictator. In fact it is quite within the bounds of possibility that the community may be led by a number of supermen working in cooperation with one another and resolving their

mutual differences by means of free discussion. In a democratic system of life and government, new supermen may come up and replace those who have outlived their utility or become outmoded, for life requires perpetual renewal and abhors stagnation. Any system of life or government which prevents this renewal of life by itself will soon find itself undermined and wrecked by the laws which govern human society.

Iqbal on Early Islamic Caliphate

In an essay entitled "Khilāfat-e-Islamiya",[17] Iqbāl deals at length with the mode of election that prevailed among the pre-Islamic Arabs and says that this pre-Islamic custom of election became a fixed principle in the early Islamic polity known as the Khilāfat-e-Rāshida. In this connection Iqbāl quotes a Ḥadīth which says that an old man named Ṭufail b. 'Āmir came to the Prophet of Islam and asked him whether the Prophet at his death would entrust to him the reins of the government, if he decided to accept Islam. The Prophet replied that when he did not have the reins of government in his own hands, how could he entrust it to any other person? Iqbāl then quotes the address delivered by Abū Bakr soon after his election as the Caliph in which Abū Bakr is reported to have said that the people should obey him so long only as he obeyed God and His Prophet and that they should try to reform him if they felt that he was acting in disregard of the laws promulgated in the Qur'ān.

All these facts show, Iqbāl goes on to remark, that Islam had from the very outset recognised the principle that the community is the real repository of political power. The electors only choose a reliable person whom they consider fit for the exercise of political power and entrust him with the reins of government. But the

assumption of power by any individual in the manner described does not entitle him to any special privileges. In the eyes of Islamic law, his personal status in no way differs from that of an ordinary Muslim. He enjoys no special power beyond that of enforcing the law as laid down in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. The ruler in Islam, says Iqbāl, is a member of the Islamic democracy like any other member. He can be sued against in a court of law, and if a suit is brought against him, he will have to attend the law court personally. Every Muslim is entitled to criticise any action taken by the ruler in his capacity as the head of the government. Individual freedom is a vital principle of the Islamic way of life. "Any mode of conduct which hampers the free development of the human individual is opposed to the sharī'ah and ethics of Islam. Every Muslim is free to act as he likes provided he does not act in disregard of the revealed law of Islam."[18]

It would appear from the above remarks that Iqbāl stresses the elective principle as the basis of Islamic democracy. Besides, he believes in the supremacy of the law and the equality of all Muslims. Freedom of expression and of criticism is also, in the opinion of Iqbāl, one of the vital principles of Islamic polity. Moreover, Iqbāl recognises that the Islamic Sharī'ah aims at ensuring the freedom of action of the individual consistent with the general welfare of the society and that any mode of life which hampers the free growth of human individuality is repugnant to the ethics of Islam.

Conclusion

We have studied the general philosophy of Iqbāl in so far as it has a bearing on his political ideas and we have also given a brief account of Iqbāl's idea of the principles underlying the early Islamic Caliphate. We are now in

a position to understand the kind of democracy Iqbāl would like the Muslims to develop in the modern world.

Every human being, according to Iqbāl, is a centre of latent power. It follows, therefore, that all those social, political, economic and spiritual conditions should be created which might enable the individual to develop the powers latent in him. This involves the necessity of reconstructing society in all its aspects. Political democracy is a necessary means of educating the people in the exercise of their rights, in giving them a sense of their own importance and in enabling them to play their role in the shaping of political, economic and educational policies. But political democracy does not function in isolation from the religious, social and economic institutions of society. If these institutions are out of harmony with the framework of political democracy, they will either have to be reconstructed or political democracy will go to pieces.

We shall not discuss here the economic and social factors which condition the effective working of a political democracy. Here we are concerned only with the intellectual and spiritual factors that help the growth of democratic institutions. One of these is the consciousness of the inherent dignity of the individual. In Iqbāl's phraseology, this is man's consciousness of his *khudi*, the awareness of his self, the idea that every one of us is possessed of a unique individuality with latent powers and potentialities which must be allowed to develop. A man who is conscious of his unique individuality is also eager to contribute to the well-being of society with all his powers and potentialities. If the existing socio-economic and political structure is such that it does not permit the growth of human individuality and its powers and potentialities, it is defective and must be corrected.

The role of the great man or the leader is to perceive those defects in society which hamper the growth of individuality and to work for their removal. The ideal man or the superman does not impose himself on society in such a manner as to eclipse all other talent and extinguish the spark that shines in other souls. His greatness lies in creating or striving to create the conditions necessary for the self-fulfilment and self-realization of all other individuals.

Society, according to Iqbāl, is an association of self-affirming individuals. But the self-affirmation of one individual should in no way hamper the self-affirmation of other individuals. If the process of self-affirmation leads to conflicts, it should not be forgotten that to some extent such conflicts are inevitable and may have even healthy effects in so far as they lead to greater preparedness and more circumspection on the part of the individuals. But if the conflicts go deeper, they may tear the whole society apart. Education, law and government come to the rescue of society in such cases, but above all, the possession of common beliefs and a general agreement on the ethical values to be followed by the society are the best safeguard against the anarchic self-affirmation. Islamic society is based on a conception of the community expounded by Iqbāl which works as an effective safeguard against the dangers inherent in individual self-affirmation. The 'Rumūz-e-Bekhudī' of Iqbāl is a conscious attempt to explain those religious and ethical principles which serve as a check upon the individuals when they develop anarchical tendencies in the process of self-affirmation.

NOTES

1. Iqbāl : *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1962, p. 147.
2. Iqbāl : Ibid.
3. Iqbāl : *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, tr. by A. J. Arberry, London, N. D., p. 30.
4. Iqbāl : *Reconstruction op. cit.*, p. 151.
5. Iqbāl : Ibid., p. 151
6. Iqbāl : Ibid., pp. 62, 63.
7. Iqbāl : Ibid., p. 63.
8. Iqbāl : *The Secrets of Self* tr. R. A. Nicholson, Lahore, 1960, see Introduction, p. xxxviii.
9. S. A. Vāhid : *Maqalāt-e-Iqbāl*, Lahore, 1963, p. 158.
10. Iqbāl : *Bāl-e-Jibrīl*, Lahore, 1959, p. 173.
11. Iqbāl : *The Secrets of Self*, op. cit., see Introduction.
12. Iqbāl : *The Mysteries of Selflessness*, op. cit., see Preface.
13. Iqbāl : *Asrar-o-Rumuz*, Lahore, 1948, p. 98.
14. Iqbāl : *The Secrets of Self*, op. cit., pp. 17, 18.
15. Iqbāl : Ibid., p. xxix see marginal notes.
16. S. A. Vāhid : op. cit., p. 85.
17. S. A. Vāhid : Ibid., p. 93.

Chapter V

IQBĀL ON THE PROBLEM OF IJTIHĀD

Discussing the principle of movement in the structure of Islam, Iqbāl says that the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change. "A society based on such a conception of Reality must reconcile in its life, the categories of permanence and change".[1] As applied to the realm of law, this means that the legal system of Islam must admit changes within its framework without deviating from its foundational principles. Ijtihād, being the principle of movement in Islam, as Iqbāl puts it, is the means whereby changes can be effected in the law of Islam, provided they are not inconsistent with the bases on which the system rests. After examining the reasons which led to the cessation of Ijtihād, Iqbāl discusses the possibility of Ijtihād in modern times and refers in this context to the attempts made in Turkey to undertake Ijtihād. While welcoming the liberal movement in modern Islam, Iqbāl warns the Muslims against taking the Protestant movement in Europe as a model and replacing the universal ethics of Islam by national ethics. He says that our religious and political reformers in their zeal for liberalism may overstep the proper limits of reform in the absence of a check on their youthful fervour.

Iqbāl goes on to discuss the question elaborately whether the law of Islam is capable of evolution. In

this connection he makes certain suggestions. For example, with regard to *Ḥadīth*, he says that if modern liberalism considers it safer not to make any indiscriminate use of them, it will only be following one of the greatest exponents of Islamic Law in Sunnī Islam. (Here Iqbāl is referring to Abū Ḥanīfah.) But he also points to the service rendered by the traditionists in insisting on the value of the concrete case as against the tendency to abstract thinking in law. Iqbāl further proposes to provide a machinery for Ijmā' in the modern times and says that Ijmā' in early Islam remained practically a mere idea. Possibly its transformation into a permanent legislative institution was contrary to the political interests of the kind of absolute monarchy that grew up in Islam immediately after the fourth Caliph".[2] In modern times, however, the transfer of the power of Ijtihād from individual representatives of schools to a Muslim legislative assembly remains, in Iqbāl's opinion, the only possible form of Ijmā'.[3] For this purpose, he proposes that the 'Ulemā' should form a vital part of Muslim legislative assemblies and guide free discussions on questions relating to law.[4]

The above is a brief account of the ideas put forward by Iqbāl in regard to the problem of Ijtihād in modern times. The questions raised by him and the suggestions he has made to tackle them require serious thinking and great intellectual effort. Therefore, it is not possible to hazard any opinion on the solutions offered by Iqbāl, without undertaking a preliminary examination of the historical factors that shaped Muslim legislation in early times and tracing the growth and evolution of Islamic jurisprudence. It is only after such an examination and detailed historical survey that we can form a correct opinion as to how modern legislative activity can function in accordance with Islamic principles and norms.

dislike of that which thou decidest and submit with full submission". (IV : 65). It is these decisions of the Prophet that came to constitute the Sunnah as it was known in later times and formed one of the main sources of Muslim legislation.

The Sunnah and the Hadith

The Sunnah is "the way of the Prophet". It denotes the general spirit and attitude underlying the activities of the Prophet and is to be distinguished from *Ḥadith* which refers to the specific decisions of the Prophet. Throughout his career as the architect of Islamic society in Medinah, the Prophet's activities covered diverse aspects of life. In his capacity as a war leader, the Prophet set many precedents. Similarly, as the ruler of Medinah and the head of the government, he showed how political problems should be solved and international relations conducted. Sometimes he had to decide civil disputes, relating to marriage, divorce etc. and through these decisions, he set precedents which were followed by the later generations of the Muslims. Thus, the history of the Prophet's wars and politics and his biography constitute the materials for his sunnah, and not merely *Ḥadith* i.e. his reported decisions on specific cases brought before him for adjudication. Indeed, there are reasons to believe that the actual decisions of the Prophet on civil disputes were not very large in number, for the Prophet was not a pan-legist. We do not find any large-scale reporting of *Ḥadith* by the Companions of the Prophet. On the other hand, the Companions seem to have been anxious to discourage the tendency of attributing statements to the Prophet. It is, of course, true that some of the later traditions (*Ḥadiths*) on the subject, such as that 'Umar forbade the companions of the Prophet from reporting *Ḥadith* in the

provinces, because that would divert the attention of the people from the study of the Qur'ān are pure inventions, but it is hard to deny the well-established historical fact that people like Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Alī not only reported very little of *Ḥadīth* but showed more than ordinary circumspection in accepting *Ḥadīth* from any other source. A person like Ibn Qutaibah who is a great defender of *Ḥadīth*, has this to say about the attitude of some eminent companions of the Prophet towards *Ḥadīth*[8].

"......'Ayeshah was the severest in refuting him (Abū Hurairah), because she had lived together both with the Prophet and Abu Hurairah. And 'Umar was similarly very strict with those who were over-zealous in reporting *Ḥadīth* from the Prophet or who brought a report without a witness. He told them that they should report from the Prophet as little as possible, because he felt that this might open the floodgates of lying and fraud due to the presence of hypocrites, wicked people and the Bedouins. A large number of the eminent companions of the Prophet like Abū Bakr, Abū 'Ubaidah, 'Abbās b. 'Abd-al-Muṭṭalib etc. used to do very little reporting from the Prophet, so much so that some of them like Sa'īd b. Zaid b. 'Amr b. Nufail who was one of the ten to be promised paradise would not report anything at all from the Prophet."

The question that arises here is whether the first four Caliphs did not need *Ḥadīth* in order to run the affairs of the country and solve the problems of the society with whose destinies they had been charged. If they did need *Ḥadīth*, why did they not set up a commission or some other agency to collect *Ḥadīth* and verify them. The verification of *Ḥadīth* was much easier for the first four Caliphs than for the later generations, because a large majority of the Companions still lived in

Mecca and Medinah. The reason seems to be that they were in possession of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. In other words, they understood the general spirit and attitude of the Prophet in regard to social and religious questions and, therefore, proceeded to tackle these questions under the general direction of the Prophet's model behaviour. It would be historically untrue to claim that the first four Caliphs displayed an attitude of rejecting the prophetic *Ḥadīth*. They certainly acted on *Ḥadīth*, whenever it was *feasible* to do so, provided they were satisfied that the *Ḥadīth* brought to their notice was authentic. But, in general, it was not *Ḥadīth* but the *Sunnah* which guided them in the solution of the problems with which they were faced.

Abū Bakr spent his career as Caliph in fighting the apostates and the rebels. 'Uthmān and 'Alī had not much aptitude for legislative activity and they had to face many internal disturbances during their reign as Caliphs. It is only 'Umar who, in spite of foreign wars and other continual preoccupations, tackled the new problems created by Muslim conquests, and much of his legislation would always serve as a model to any authority that desires to enact laws for a changing situation in the proper Islamic spirit. But 'Umar's legislation bears the impress of the prophetic model. He departs in some respects from the specific decisions of the Prophet, i.e. *Ḥadīth*, as in the case of the problem relating to the division of conquered lands. But he always sticks to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, that is, the general spirit and attitude underlying the Prophet's decisions. Therefore, as far as the reigns of the first four Caliphs are concerned, we can say with a great degree of assurance that although *Ḥadīth* was not always followed, the *Sunnāh* of the Prophet was invariably adhered to.

The Umayyad Period

During the Umayyad period, Muslim legislative activity proceeded on two parallel lines. The Umayyads had appointed their own Qāzīs (judges), but their decisions were not treated as precedents, because they did not command sufficient respect in the world of Islamic learning. It would not be true to say that the Qāzīs always left the existing practice intact and did not modify it in accordance with Islamic norms, because being Muslims, they must have brought their Islamic outlook to bear on the cases which they had to decide. There is evidence to show that some of the Umayyad Qāzīs were deeply influenced by 'Umar's legislation. For example, it is said of Tawba that when the plaintiffs sought his permission to sell a *Mukātab* slave (one who has contracted to purchase his freedom by instalments) on the ground that he had defaulted to make payments, Tawba was prepared to grant the slave one year's grace to make up the arrears. Only when the slave expressed his doubts as to his ability to keep up future payments and declared himself willing to be sold at once did Tawba authorise the sale.[9] Similarly, Tawba instituted a register of the waqfs—religious trusts or charitable endowments. Before his time such properties had been under the exclusive control of private administrators or beneficiaries. "I cannot see," said Tawba, "that the ultimate purpose of these charitable gifts is other than the benefit of the poor and the needy. I therefore think that I should take charge of the *waqfs* to protect their interests." In both these cases Tawba seems to have followed the liberal precedents set by 'Umar.

However, it cannot be denied that the Umayyad Qāzīs, in general, lacked the expert knowledge possessed by the early jurists of Islam, who enjoyed the confidence of the Prophet's companions. The Qāzīs had no contact

with the Prophet's Companions and their successors whose opinions carried more authority for the obvious reason that they were the followers of the prophetic model. The Companions and their successors were the pioneers of the new jurisprudence which was growing up independently in Iraq, Syria and Hedjaz. The Islamic world had still no theory of jurisprudence to go by and the Companions and the successors mostly employed their *Rā'y* (or opinion) in deciding new cases brought before them. However, the *Rā'y* or opinion of the companions cannot be placed on a par with the *Rā'y* of the later generations. Even in later times, when the principles and theory of Islamic jurisprudence had been perfected and *Rā'y* came to be looked upon as something arbitrary and, therefore, unacceptable, some scholars were inclined to accept the *Rā'y* of the Companions as authoritative. For example, Ibn-al-Qayyīm holds[10] that the *Rā'y* of the Companions stands in a different category, because the Companions were the most understanding (افقه), the most virtuous, their knowledge was much deeper, they were the people who witnessed the revelation of the Qur'ān and knew how to interpret it. They also understood the objectives of the Prophet, who was the law-giver. In this connection, Ibn-al-Qayyīm also refers to the fact that in some cases the Qur'ān itself agreed with the *Rā'y* (opinion) expressed by some of the Companions like 'Umar. For example, with regard to the killing of the prisoners of Badr, the Qur'ān gave a judgement in favour of 'Umar's opinion. Similarly, 'Umar expressed the opinion that the wives of the Prophet should remain concealed from the public eye and the Qur'ān came forward with identical commands.

In opposition to Ibn-al-Qayyīm, Āmidī refuses to attach any peculiar sanctity to the opinions or the con-

sensus of the Companions. He says[11] that people often argue from the Prophet's remarks, "follow my *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the rightly-guided caliphs" and from his further statement, "My Companions are like stars, if you follow any of them, you will find the right guidance". They also assert that the Companions enjoyed a unique position because they had seen the company of the Prophet, they were the witnesses of the revelation and were acquainted with the Prophet's way of interpretation. But, remarks Amidī, if the Companions enjoyed a unique position and this gives them a special status, then the opinion of the Anṣār cannot be preferred to that of the Muhājirīn (emigrants) and the opinion of Muhājirīn (emigrants) cannot be preferred to that of the ten companions who were promised paradise. Similarly, the opinion of these ten cannot be preferred to that of Abū Bakr and 'Umar.

The argument of Āmidī does not, however, carry much conviction. From the point of view of juristic understanding, the Companions should not be classified as the Helpers and the Emigrants or those who were promised paradise and those to whom no such promise was held forth. These distinctions are quite immaterial as far as jurisprudence goes. It is not the moral and spiritual superiority of the Companions that is of importance from this point of view but their juristic ability. Among the Companions those who had better juristic understanding were certainly in a much more advantageous position than the people of the later generations, for the Companions had a better grasp of the objectives which the Prophet had set before himself. That is the reason why the *Rā'y* of the Companions and their successors commanded the respect of the early jurists and formed the starting point of the juristic activity of the ancient schools of law.

It is not true to say that "the first scholar jurists were men of religion rather than men of law"[12], and that as against the Umayyad legal tradition, which was pragmatic, their approach to law was initially that of religious idealists".[13] In the first place, the sharp antithesis between law and religion made by the author of these remarks did not exist in those early times, nor is it valid for Muslim society in any period of its history. Secondly, the fact that the first scholar jurists were religious men does not disqualify them from undertaking juristic work. There were many other religious men besides our early jurists but they did not choose the field of jurisprudence for their religious activity, because they did not have the necessary qualifications. If the early jurists had been idealists, they would not have attached so much importance to the existing practice or the consensus of the scholars. The secret of their success lies not in their idealism but in the fact that they sedulously applied the norms and standards set by the Prophet and his Companions, while the Ummayyad legal practice failed to do so.

For the further development of the ruling ideas and principles of Islamic jurisprudence, let us turn to the founders of the ancient schools.

Malik

Mālik usually takes his stand on the agreed practice of the people of Medinah. Sometimes he calls this practice the *Sunnah* of Medinah. For example,[14]

Mālik said: The *Sunnah* with us is that if a man divorces his wife and takes her back after she has passed a few days of '*Iddah* and divorces her again without having touched her, then the woman should not take into account the days of the '*Iddah* she has already passed.

On the other hand, she would start her *'Iddah* once again from the day he divorced her a second time."

It is obvious that by *Sunnah*, Mālik does not mean here the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, but the *Sunnah* (or the agreed practice) of Medinah. Sometimes he used the words (الامر عندنا) (Al-Amro-Indana), i.e. the practice with us, as in the following:—[15]

> "Mālik said with regard to a woman who has obtained separation from her husband by making a payment that if it became known that the husband was cruel to her and she felt aggrieved, then he would have to repay her what she paid to him. This is what I used to hear and this is the basis on which we take decisions (والذى عليه الامر عندنا)".

On some occasions, Mālik uses the words (الامر مجتمع عليه عندنا) (al-Amr-Mujtame-Alaih-i-Indana), i.e. our agreed practice. For example:—[16]

> "Mālik said: I did not cease to hear from the scholars (الامر مجتمع عليه عندنا) that and this is our agreed practice if a man does no harm to his wife and does not treat her badly and he has given nothing to his wife and the wife desires separation from him, it is permissible for him to accept some payment made by her and this was done by the Prophet with respect to the wife of Sābit b. Qais when she came to the Prophet desiring separation and said that whatever he had given her was quite abundant. The Prophet said: take from her something and so he took something and left the remainder with her."

It will be noted that here the *Ḥadīth* quoted by Mālik does not form his main argument. He is in the first place arguing from the agreed practice of Medinah and introduces the *Ḥadīth* at a secondary level. In some cases he prefers practice to *Ḥadīth*. For example:—[17]

> "Mālik reported to me from. . . from . . . from 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās that the Prophet said: the married

woman having no husband has a better right over herself than her guardians, while the unmarried woman should be asked permission about herself and her permission is her silence. Mālik reported to me that it reached him from S'aīd b. al-Musayyab that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb said: a woman should not be married except with the permission of her guardian or people who have sound opinion in her family. Mālik reported to me that it reached him that Qasim b. Mohammad and Sālim b. 'Abdullah used to marry their unmarried daughters and they did not consult them."

The question is why Mālik preferred the agreed practice of Medinah to *Ḥadīth*. There seem to have been many reasons, one of which was the inapplicability of *Ḥadīth* to the existing situation. For example, Mālik did not favour the washing of vessels seven times when a dog put its mouth into the vessel containing water or milk. When asked about this, he replied that the *Ḥadīth* has been reported, but he did know what it meant.[18] Here he does not reject the *Ḥadīth* as being unauthentic but feels that it cannot be applied in practice, for the meaning of the *Ḥadīth* is quite clear. The phrase, 'I do not know what it means' refers to the difficulty of applying the *Ḥadīth*.

A more cogent reason has been given by Ibn-al-Qāsim,[19] the author of *al-Mudawwanah*, who refers to the *Ḥadīth* that 'Ayeshah married Ḥafṣah, daughter of 'Abdur Raḥman to al-Mundhar, son of Zubayr, without the permission of her guardian. Ibn al-Qāsim says that the *Ḥadīth* is there but if it had been accompanied by practice, we would have been justified in following it. However, like many other *Ḥadīths*, it is unaccompanied by practice. It is like the *Ḥadīth* reported from the Prophet that he used fragrance during Iḥrām and that he remarked that the adulterer does not commit adultery

nor the thief commits theft while he is a believer, whereas the fact is that God placed a Ḥadd (punishment) on a Muslim during his state of belief and ordained that the thief's hand should be cut off (while he is in a state of belief). Ibn-al-Qāsim says that similar *Ḥadīths* have been related from the Companions of the Prophet. But they did not gain sufficient credence and strength to be followed in practice. The result was that practice differed from these *Ḥadīths* and the common people as well as the Companions of the Prophet followed a different *Ḥadīth* which was backed by practice. So the *Ḥadīth* remained without its validity being denied, but it was not followed in practice. On the other hand, actual practice was based on a different *Ḥadīth*, because it was followed by a number of people. Thus the successors of the Companions of the Prophet followed a certain *Ḥadīth* on the basis of what they heard from the Companions of the Prophet and other people followed what they heard from the successors without asserting that the particular *Ḥadīth* (which was not followed) is false and without rejecting it (in theory).

It is clear from the above statement of Ibn-al-Qāsim that of the many *Ḥadīths* which were reported from the Prophet not all could gain sufficient credence or strength to be applied in practice. If we examine the possible reasons for the rejection of certain *Ḥadīths* (not in theory but in practice) we find that some of those *Ḥadīths* may not have fully represented the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, because the *Sunnah* or the ideal practice of the Prophet was the criterion by which *Ḥadīths* seem to have been judged in that early period or the applicability of the *Ḥadīth* to the existing conditions of society may have been questioned. In any case, acceptance of a *Ḥadīth* was conditioned by factors other than the reliability of the narrators and whether the links in the chain of transmis-

sion were complete. The content of the *Ḥadīth* was given far more importance than the importance that was attached to it by the Muhaddithūn in later times.

In regard to the precedents set by 'Umar and other early caliphs, Mālik adopted a similar attitude, i.e. he did not always follow these precedents and relied on the agreed practice of Medinah. For example, there is a report[20] in Muwaṭṭa that the slaves of Ḥāṭib stole a camel belonging to a person from the tribe of Muzainah. The matter was referred to 'Umar. At first he ordered Kat͟hīr b. al-Ṣalt to cut off the hands of the slaves. Then he remarked, "I see you keep them hungry" and threatened to put the owners of the slaves under a severe penalty. Turning to the person whose camel had been stolen, 'Umar asked him about its price and, on being informed that the owner would not like to sell it even for four hundred dirhams, 'Umar asked the master of the slaves to give the aggrieved party a sum of eight hundred dirhams. After mentioning this incident, Yāḥya says, "I heard Mālik say: our practice in this regard is not to double the price."

Ibn Ḥazm who advocates a literal observance of the *Sunnah* severely criticises Mālik for his reliance on Medinese practice. He says[21] that the followers of Mālik hold that it is not permissible to act upon a report until it is accompanied by practice, but if you receive an authentic report which has not been put into practice and it embodies some truth, then it is immaterial whether or not it is put into practice. If all those who live on this earth, Ibn Ḥazm remarks, agree to disobey the Prophet, this would not justify the conclusion that the Prophet is to be disobeyed. Again, he asks Mālik: do you want to follow the practice of the whole community or the practice of Abū Bakr, or that of 'Umar or that of 'Uthmān or 'Alī (and there were no leaders in Medinah other than these)

or do you want to follow the practice of a particular person residing in Medinah or the practice of all the Medinese jurists or of some of them.

ثم نسئا لهم فنقول عمل من تريدون ـ اعمل امة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم كلهم ام عمل إبى بكر ام عمل عمر ام عمل عثمان ام عمل على ولم يكن فى المدينة امام،، غير هولاء ـ ام عمل صاحب من سكان المدينة ام عمل جميع فقها المدينة ام عمل بعضهم

In this criticism, Ibn Ḥazm does not realise that no question of disobedience to the Prophet is involved here, for when a *Ḥadīth* from the Prophet has failed to gain general acceptance, there must be some weighty reason behind its non-acceptance. For example, its inapplicability to a particular situation or the general acceptance of another *Ḥadīth* on the same subject. Similarly, in asking the question whether Mālik wants to follow Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān or 'Alī or any particular resident of Medinah or all the jurists of Medinah or some of them, Ibn Ḥazm does not have in mind the idea of consensus, for a consensus does not rest upon the authority of one person or a group of persons but on a general agreement , not necessarily of all persons.

In the same vein Ibn Ḥazm criticises Mālik, because he does not invariably follow the practice of Abū Bakr or 'Umar. Ibn Ḥazm says that not more than ten decisions of Abū Bakr have been reported in Muwaṭṭā' and Mālik opposes eight of them.[22] He goes to cite many cases in which Mālik differed from 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī. This criticism also lacks cogency because Mālik adhered to the agreed practice of Medinah as against the opinions expressed and the decisions given by individual authorities.

Perhaps Ibn Ḥazm is on firmer ground when he says that Medinah was just like other cities of the Islamic world such as Kūfah and Basrah where jurisprudence was pursued and there is no reason why special import-

ance should be attached to the Medinese *Sunnah*. He writes:—[23]

"'Umar erected many cities, like Basrah, Kufah, Egypt and Syria and populated them with Muslims. For these cities he appointed governors from among the eminent companions like Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Mughīrah b. Sh'uba, Abū Musa Ash'arī, 'Atba b. Ghazwān and others. Similarly, 'Uthmān appointed over them governors like Mu'awīyah and 'Amr b. Al-'Ās. 'Alī appointed 'Uthmān b. Ḥunayf as governor of Baṣrah and also 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās. Over Egypt, he appointed Qais b. Sa'd. Do you think that 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī and their governors concealed the religion of Islam from the inhabitants of these cities . . . what is then the special importance of Medinah and its *Sunnah* because Medinah was a city like one of them. Medinah was, again, governed by miscreants like 'Amr b. Sa'īd, Ḥajjaj b. Yusuf, Ṭāriq and Khālid b. 'Abdullah al- Qisrī and 'Uthmān b. Ḥayyān al-Murrī. All of them were enemies of God, except Abī Bakr b. Mohammad b. Ḥazm, Abān b. 'Uthmān and 'Umar b. 'Abdul 'Azīz. What is then the distinction enjoyed by Medinah in comparison with other cities in respect of scholarship and reporting of traditions."

This is perhaps well-considered criticism. Only it overlooks the regional character of all ancient schools of law and the fact that the jurists of all these regions preferred their own local authorities over those of other regions. Therefore, if Mālik followed the practice of Medinah, he was not entirely without justification, although for a Muslim living in a later period of history the practice of Medinah is not more sacrosanct than the decisions taken and the traditions established by other regional schools.

An important fact to be noted about Mālik's method is that he takes his precedents not only from the Prophet and the Companions but also from some of the Umayyad rulers like 'Umar b. 'Abdul 'Azīz, Marwān and 'Abdul Malik b. Marwān. Thus about Marwān he says that he used to decide about a person who divorced his wife with a final divorce (Al-battah) that this will be regarded as being tantamount to three divorces. After reporting this, he says,[24] "*I like this best in whatever I have heard regarding this matter*".

Similarly, Mālik reports from 'Abdul Malik b. Marwān[25] that he gave a slave girl as a gift to one of his friends. Sometime later, he asked him about her. His friend replied: I intended to give her as a gift to my son so that he may do this and this to her. 'Abdul Malik said: Marwān was more pious than you are. He gave a slave girl to his son as a gift. Then he said: Don't approach her, because I saw her ankles bare.'

The Iraqian School

The Irāqian school did not reject *Ḥadīth*, as has been generally supposed. On the contrary, it is they who insist on *Ḥadīth*, as distinguished from "practice", although their own *Ḥadīth* is also largely regional. But they were more cautious in their approach to *Ḥadīth*. Abū Yūsuf always insists that only the well-known *Sunnah* should be followed. Perhaps by well-known *Sunnah* he means the *Ḥadīths* which were reported by the authorities of the Irāqian school. However, there was no total rejection of *Ḥadīth* and Awzā'ī's charge[26] that whenever a *Ḥadīth* is brought to the notice of Abū Ḥanīfah, he opposes it and adopts something else is not well founded. Thus, when a plaintiff brought a suit against another person and had a witness with him, Abu Ḥanīfah maintained that there was no need for the plaintiff to take an

oath. He argued from the *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet that the oath lies on the defendant and on the plaintiff lies the obligation of bringing a witness.[27] But in the case of allotting booty to horses and horsemen, Abū Hanīfah followed a report by Mundhar b. Abī Khamīsa al-Hamadānī that an 'Amil of 'Umar in Syria allotted one share each to the horse and the horseman, in preference to a well-known *Ḥadīth*, which allots two shares to the horse.

Joseph Schacht has the following explanation for this Irāqian practice of sometimes following[29] the *Ḥadīth* and sometimes rejecting it:—"We now realize that the arguments which were adduced by the ancient schools of law against the traditions from the Prophet, for instance, the assumption of repeal and the consideration that the Companions would not have been unaware of the Prophet's decisions, were directed against the traditions from the Prophet, not as such but only in so far as by their recent growth they tended to disrupt the living tradition of the schools. This explains the apparent inconsistency of sometimes referring to traditions from the Prophet and sometimes rejecting them in favour of the established doctrine".

This explanation seeks to create the impression that the Irāqī school rigidly adhered to its living practice and tradition and would not tolerate anything which came in its way. It is not very clear what Schacht means by living tradition. We hope he does not mean Umayyad practice or the prevalent customs and habits of the Irāqians. For these things, the Irāqi jurists had no great respect and they were not inclined to maintain them at all costs, even when they were in flagrant contradiction to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. If, however, he means that the Irāqians generally relied upon the *Ḥadīth* current

in their own school, we have no quarrel with him. The Irāqians were entitled to adopt this attitude as much as the Medinese school was entitled to rely on its own practice. Therefore, in accordance with this attitude they might have rejected *Ḥadīths* which were reported by other sources than their own. In other words, they gave more credence to the *Ḥadīth* of their own *Shuyūkh* (teachers) than to the *Ḥadīth* circulated by other sources and narrated by authorities which did not belong to their own school. That this was actually the case is shown by Abū Yūsuf's insistence on the well-known *Sunnah* (السنة المعروفه) by which he means the *Sunnah* as known to Irāqian scholars. But there might have been other reasons for the non-acceptance of *Ḥadīth* by Irāqī jurists, such as the inapplicability of a *Ḥadīth* to a particular situation. We have seen how Mālik remarked about a *Ḥadīth*, that the *Ḥadīth* is there but he did not know what it meant, meaning that it is impossible of application. In any case, there is no reason to believe that the Irāqians were prejudiced against *Ḥadīth* as such.

That the Irāqians had no great respect for the existing practice is shown by the remarks made by Abū Yūsuf against Auzā'ī's stand in respect of the existing practice in Syria. According to Abū Ḥanīfah, if during a war, a person brings two horses, he will receive only one share of the booty. Auzā'ī says that the two horses will receive two shares, but if there are more than two horses, the additional horses will not be given any share. "This", he says,[30] "is the practice of the learned ones and the leaders have followed the same practice." Commenting on this remark of Auzā'ī, Abū Yūsuf says that no report about this has reached us from the Prophet or any of the Companions except one and one report is rare. As regards Auzā'ī's saying that this is the practice of the learned ones and the leaders have been following this

practice, this, remarks Abū Yūsuf, is just like the claim made by the people of Hedjāz that the *Sunnah* has gone this way (بذالک مضت السنة). "Who is the leader who has practised this and who is the learned one who has followed this. Is he worthy of being accepted as such. Is his knowledge trustworthy". This shows that the Irāqians did not adhere to the practice of the common people or of the political leaders.

As far as Abū Yūsuf is concerned, he employs a good deal of reasoning and does not rely merely on *Ḥadīth*. In his arguments with Auzā'ī, he does not quote *Ḥadīth* to silence his opponent but uses a good deal of argument, that is, his own Ijtihād, to convince him that his stand is not correct. In the process he brings traditions and Athār, but his main emphasis seems to be on sound reasoning. Thus, Abū Ḥanīfah says that if a person's name is entered in the Dīwān as an infantryman and he enters the enemy territory as an infantryman and he after purchases a horse on which he fights, he shall be paid from the Ghanimah (spoils) only the share of an infantryman. Auzā'ī maintains, on the other hand, that there was no dīwān during the time of the Prophet and the Prophet gave shares to the cavalry and this practice was followed by the leaders of the Muslims. Abū Yūsuf replies to Auzā'ī asking whether he had any *Athār* (tradition) backed by reliable authority that the Prophet gave the share of a horseman to a person who went to war with him as an infantryman and afterwards borrowed or purchased a horse and fought the war on horseback. "Do you not see", remarks Abū Yūsuf,[31] "that if a person fought on horseback for some days and then sold it to someone else who fought on horseback for some time whether both these persons will receive a share, while the horse is only one. Matters will be decided on what happened when the army began to move. He

who goes as a horseman with the army in the enemy territory shall be treated as a horseman, otherwise as a foot-soldier".

Similarly, Abū Ḥanīfah says that when a slave is fighting with his master, it is permissible for him to give security to some one from the enemy, but if the slave is not fighting, he cannot be permitted to extend security to anyone from among the enemy. Auzā'ī says that the slave's security is permissible even if he is not fighting. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭab confirmed a slave's offer of security and he did not give any thought to the fact whether or not the slave was fighting along with his master. Abū Yūsuf says,[32] it is not for the slave to extend security or to appear as witness, be it in small matters or big ones. "Do you not see that he has no authority over his own person? He cannot purchase anything of his own accord and he has no authority to marry any woman. How can his security be acceptable to Muslims when his own act is disallowed for himself (و فعله لا يجوز علی نفسه). Do you not see that if he were a slave of the enemy and entered Muslim territory and embraced Islam, whether the security extended by him would be acceptable to the Muslims? Do you see that if he were a Muslim slave and his master a *dhimmī* (non-Muslim), whether the security extended by him would be considered valid?" After stating all these arguments Abū Yūsuf quotes a tradition related by Fudhayl b. Zaid who said: we were besieging the fort of a people when a slave shot an arrow in which he stuck a paper promising security. 'Umar held that this security was valid. Abū Yūsuf says that this *Hadīth* applies to a slave who is fighting in a war and were it not for this *Athar* (tradition) we would not have held that the security of a slave was valid at all, whether or not he was engaged in fighting.

Another example of Abū Yūsuf's reasoning relates to a non-believer who embraces Islam and then joins the Muslim army in the enemy territory. Abū Ḥanīfah says that such a person shall not be given a share of booty, unless he fights alongside of the Muslims. Auzā'ī holds, on the other hand, that if such a person joins the Muslim army before the division of spoils, Muslims are under an obligation to give him a share from the spoils. Commenting on this opinion of Auzā'ī, Abū Yūsuf remarks,[33] "Think of what Auzā'ī is saying: do you not see that with regard to the Muslim army which enters the enemy territory to help another Muslim army which is fighting the enemy, he holds the opinion that it shall not share the spoils with the first army but with regard to this person he says that he shall be given a share even though he embraced Islam after the army had captured the booty. The Muslim army which came to help the first Muslim army strengthened it, made up for its weakness and formed its main support but still Auzā'ī would not permit it to receive its share of booty, while this person who fought against the Muslims and prevented them from capturing booty, but who embraced Islam when he saw that the Muslims had gained the upperhand, is allowed his share of the booty. What a wonderful decision on Auzā'ī's part and we do not know that either the Prophet or any of our predecessors gave a share of booty to such a one. We have been informed that a party of Banū Quraizah embraced Islam. The Prophet gave them security of life and property, but he did not give them any share of the booty."

In all the three examples given above, Abū Yūsuf mainly relies on his own reasoning (Ijtihād) and brings in *Ḥadīth* to support his arguments. This does not mean that he attaches no importance to *Ḥadīth*, but he is cautious in accepting *Ḥadīth*. In one place he says,[34]

"You should stick to *Ḥadīth* which is well-known and you should not accept rare *Ḥadīth*." A little later he remarks, "So leave the rare *Ḥadīth* and stick to the *Ḥadīth* which is followed by the community in general and which is known to the Fuqahā' and which agrees with the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*." The criteria laid down by Abū Yūsuf for the acceptance of a *Ḥadīth* are, therefore, (1) that the *Ḥadīth* should be followed by the community in general (2) it should be known to the Fuqahā' (Jurists) and (3) that it should agree with the Qur'ān. Of these (1) and (2) mean that the authenticity of the *Ḥadīth* should be sanctioned by Ijmā' and practice, so that we may conclude that Abū Yūsuf too, like Imām Mālik, gives great importance to Ijmā' and practice. Unlike Auzā'ī, he does not rely on the practice of the political leaders but on the practice of the jurists of his own school and their consensus.

Let us now discuss the viewpoint of Imām Moḥammad al-Shaybānī, another outstanding legist of the Irāqī school. There is far less of personal reasoning in al-Shaybānī than in Abū Yūsuf. In his Muwaṭṭā', he reports from Imām Mālik and then expresses his agreement or disagreement with him. But he places greater reliance on reports. For example, with regard to the question of a witness plus an oath, al-Shaybānī quotes[58] Mālik as saying that the Prophet gave a judgement on the basis of an oath with a witness (اليمين مع الشاهد) but he does not accept this report of Mālik and quotes Ibn-Shihāb al-Zuhrī who says that this was an innovation introduced by Mu'āwīyah. He also refers to Ibn Juraij as saying that 'Atā b. Abī Rabāḥ informed him that at first judgements were not given except on the basis of two witnesses. The first to give a judgement on the basis of an oath with a witness was 'Abdul Malik b. Marwān.

In addition to relying on reports, Al-Shaybānī often accepts the consensus of Ḥanafī jurists, which shows that, by a natural process, Ijmā' had become a powerful arbiter of questions in dispute. Below we quote a few instances of al-Shaybānī's reliance on the Ijmā' of the Irāqian jurists.

Al-Shaybānī quotes a report from Mālik that a person cursed his wife during the life-time of the Prophet and declared that the child born to his wife was not his child. The Prophet ordered separation between the husband and the wife. With regard to the rights of the child, Mālik remarks that the child goes with his mother (i.e. he will inherit from his mother and shall belong to her). Al-Shaybānī says: "We follow this: *this is the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah and the generality of our Fuqahā'.*"

Al-Shaybānī quotes[33] a report from Mālik that a daughter of 'Ubaidullah b. 'Umar was married to the son of 'Abdullah b. 'Umar. The latter died without having fixed a dower for her. The woman's mother demanded her dower. Ibn 'Umar said: she cannot be given a dower. On her refusal to accept this decision, the matter was referred to Zaid b. Thābit who decided that she could not be paid her dower but she should get her share of inheritance from her deceased husband. Al-Shaybānī says: we do not follow this and then goes on to quote Abū Ḥanifah who said that a person married a woman and did not fix her dower. He died without having had conjugal relations with her. 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd decided that she should get the same amount of dower as other women in her family. After this, al-Shaybānī quotes Masrūq b. al-Ajda' as having said that there cannot be any inheritance before there is a dower, which means that a woman who has not received her dower from her husband cannot inherit

from him. Al-Shaybānī says: we follow this and *this is the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah and the generality of our Fuqahā'*.

Again, al-Shāybanī quotes a report from Mālik that 'Abdullah b. 'Amr al-Ḥadhramī came to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb with a complaint against one of his slaves and requested that his hands be cut off, as he had committed a theft. When 'Umar asked him as to the nature of his theft, Ḥadhramī said: "He has stolen the mirror of my wife costing eighty dirhams." 'Umar refused to apply the punishment of theft and remarked: "Your servant stole ." Al-Shāybanī says : "We follow this. If a slave steals some thing from a near relation of his or from his master or master's wife or the husband of his mistress, his hands cannot be cut off". He goes on to remark that if a man steals some thing from his sister or brother or aunt, his hand cannot be cut off, for if he were a destitute, he would have a right to a share in their wealth. "*This is the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah and the generality of our Fuqahā'*".

It is clear from the examples given above that al-Shāybanī relies much less on his own Ijtihād and far more on the consensus of the 'Irāqī jurists. As against this, Abū Yūsuf exercises his independent judgement on most questions, although in respect of *Ḥadīth*, he too relies on the consensus of 'Irāqī scholars, accepting those *Ḥadīth* only which are well-known to 'Irāqī jurists.

Shafi'ī

Shāfi'ī occupies a prominent place in the history of Islamic jurisprudence. He was the first to realise that the differences among the regional schools of jurisprudence would sooner or later lead to a juristic chaos and, therefore, some means should be discovered to bring uniformity in juristic principles and provide a common basis for juristic decisions. For this purpose, he advocated greater reliance on *Ḥadīth*. It was mainly due to the writings of

Imām Shāfi'ī that *Ḥadīth* became a mass movement. Before him *Ḥadīth* had sometimes been neglected in favour of regional practice, namely, the Ijmā' of the scholars living in Medinah, 'Irāq or Syria. In place of the Ijtihād and Ijma' of the regional scholars, Shāfi'ī puts the prophetic Sunnah "*which, for him, does not serve as a general directive but as something absolutely literal and specific and whose only vehicle is the transmission of Ḥadīth.*"[40]

According to Coulson[41], Shāfi'ī was not propounding any completely novel idea. "There had been a growing tendency for the early schools, through the projection backwards of the doctrine, loosely to represent their *Sunnah* as rooted in the practice of the Prophet. Ash-Shāfi'ī exploited this tendency, confirming its correctness as a matter of principle by the thesis of the divine nature of the Prophet's authority and arguing as a matter of form, that the Prophet's practice could be properly ascertained and established by a tradition. His doctrine thus achieves a subtle synthesis of the apparently contradictory attitudes of the "Establishment" in the early schools and the opposite groups."

Here we are not concerned with the question whether Imām Shāfi'ī was attempting to reconcile the viewpoint of the regional schools and their opponents who rejected Ijtihād and the Ijmā' of the jurists resulting therefrom and sought to go back to the Ḥadīth of the Prophet as a sure and unfailing standard of juristic decisions. But if Shāfi'ī's aim was, as Coulson says, to prove that the Prophet's *Sunnah* could best be ascertained and established by means of *Ḥadīth*, he was in fact opposing the entire current of the juristic thought of the time, for the writings of Abū Yūsuf show that the jurists of the ancient schools dreaded the prospect of *Ḥadīth* replacing the Ijma' achieved by the regional schools through the process of Ijtihād. This is apparent from Abū Yūsuf's insistence

on the well-known *Sunnah* and the condition which he lays down in regard to the acceptance of *Ḥadīth*, namely, that it should be known to the jurists. Not content with this, Abū Yūsuf brings a *Ḥadīth* in his support which states, "*Ḥadīth* from me will spread, so what comes to you in my name and agrees with the Qur'ān, take it as coming from me, but what comes to you in my name but is in conflict with the Qur'ān cannot be from me". Abū Yūsuf further quotes[42] a report from Qarzah b. Ka'b-al-Anṣārī who says, "Umar b. Khaṭṭāb accompanied us till we reached a certain place. There he said: Do you know why I accompany you? They said: Yes, because we are entitled to this honour. He said: You are certainly entitled to this honour but you will be going to a people who will be reading the Qur'ān and humming with it like the bees. So relate very little of the traditions of the Prophet to these people."

Ibn Ḥazm rejects the authenticity of this report[43] from Qarzah b. Ka'b on the ground that Qarzah b. Ka'b never met Sh'ābī who is said to have narrated this report. But the issue in dispute is not whether the report is authentic or unauthentic. The important fact is that Abū Yūsuf quotes this report in order to check the growing tendency towards the multiplication of traditions.

Instead of treating Shāfi'ī as the representative of a growing tendency towards the authentication of the *Sunnah* by means of *Ḥadīth*, it would be more in keeping with facts to regard him as representing a reaction against the *Rāy-Ijmā'* process embedded in the regional schools. The ancient schools of law decided cases on the basis of *Rāy*, which was both informal and arbitrary in the sense that it was not disciplined by rules and regulations. Similarly, the *Ijmā'* of the ancient schools was an informal affair. There was no *Ijmā'* machinery, whereby it could be factually ascertained that *Ijmā'* had actually taken place.

Once two or more jurists of outstanding merit agreed on an opinion, it was taken for granted that an *Ijmā'* had occurred, and even this *Ijmā'* was regional in character so that there were great differences of opinion as between the representatives of the various schools. Shāfi'ī attacked both the regional character of the *Ijmā'* achieved by the ancient schools and the use of *Rāy* which was more or less subjective. In introducing *Ḥadīth*, Shafi'ī really wanted to introduce objectivity and universality in juristic decisions. While a *Sunnah* may have been regional in character, *Ḥadīth* was by its very nature universal in its range. There could not be regional *Ḥadīth*, as there could be regional *Sunnah*. Moreover, *Ḥadīth* obviated the necessity of resorting to subjective *Rāy*. Freedom of interpretation and personal judgement was narrowly restricted in so far as *Ḥadīth* was concerned. Therefore, *Ḥadīth* ensured both objectivity and universality, the two qualities which the juristic decisions of the early schools lacked. Hence Shāfi'ī's opposition to the existing conception of *Ijmā'* and his insistence on the use of *Ḥadīth* to the exclusion of *Rāy* in arriving at juristic decisions.

In trying to replace the *Rāy-Ijmā'* process by the use of *Ḥadīth*, Shafi'ī had to take into account a serious difficulty that stood in the way of the acceptance of *Ḥadīth* as the normal basis for juristic decisions. This was the problem of contradictory *Ḥadīths*. How to reconcile the conflicts in *Ḥadīths*? The admission that these conflicts could not be resolved, for they were the inevitable result of a historical process of *Ḥadīth* formulation by the Muslims themselves, was impossible. The unconscious process of attributing statements to the Prophet had gone too far to be reversed. Therefore Shāfi'ī put forward a new theory for reconciling the conflicts in *Ḥadīths*. In the Risālah he says :[44]

"As to contradictory traditions where no indications exist to specify which is the abrogating and the abrogated, they are all in accord with one another and contradiction does not really exist among them. (For) the apostle of God, being an Arab by tongue and by country may have laid down a general rule intended to be general and another general rule intended to be particular... or a certain question may have been asked to which he gave a certain concise answer, leading some of the transmitters to relate the tradition in detail and others in brief, rendering the meaning of the tradition partly clear and partly vague, or [it may happen] that the transmitter of a tradition related the answer he heard [from the Prophet] without knowing what the question had been, for (had he known) the question he would have understood clearly from the reasoning on which the answer was based. He [the Prophet] may have likewise laid down a *Sunnah* covering a particular situation and another covering a different one, but some of those who [related what they] heard failed to distinguish between the two differing situations for which he had laid down the "Sunnahs".

The considerations put forward by Shafi'i to resolve the apparent contradictions in *Ḥadīth* literature really do not get at the heart of the matter. If the aim of Shāfi'ī was to introduce objectivity in juristic decisions, that object still remained difficult of attainment, for *Ḥadīth* itself was subject to differing and subjective interpretations. Who was to decide which general rule was intended to be general and which was meant to be particular? If a tradition was partly clear and partly vague, as Shāfi'ī asserts, its full import could be grasped only by the subjective intelligence of individual thinkers leaving room for differences of opinion. If the transmitter of a tradition related the Prophet's answer to a question addressed to him but failed to mention the question itself,

the practical utility of the *Ḥadīth* was thereby considerably reduced and if, as Shāfi'ī says, the Prophet may have laid down a *Sunnah* for a particular situation, it again became a matter of individual opinion or *Rāy* whether the situation for which the *Sunnah* had been laid down had or had not ceased to exist. The application of a *Ḥadīth* depended not merely on external evidence or its supposed authenticity, but also on its content and meaning both of which could be differently interpreted by different scholars. So the expectation that the introduction of *Ḥadīth* on a large scale would reduce to a minimum the chances of disagreement was doomed to disappointment. A *Ḥadīth* accepted by one school of thought was often rejected by another.

Shāfi'ī himself rejects in many cases the *Ḥadīth* employed by the other schools of law on the ground that the *Ḥadīth* in question is not well-established and he brings some other *Ḥadīth* in support of his stand. For example, in the case of a theft, Abū Ḥanīfah held the opinion that the hand of the thief should not be cut, if the article stolen was valued at ten dirhams. He took this decision on the basis of *Ḥadīth* reported by 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd through 'Alī. According to this *Ḥadīth*, the hand of a thief should not be cut except when the theft amounted to ten dirhams. Shāfi'ī says[45] that the *Ḥadīth* on which Abū Ḥanīfah relied is not well-established and the opinion expressed by 'Alī and Ibn Mas'ūd cannot be accepted as an argument by the side of a Prophetic *Ḥadīth*. He then goes on to quote another *Ḥadīth* from 'Ayeshah through a number of persons ending in 'Abdullah b. 'Umar. According to this *Ḥadīth* the Prophet is reported to have said that the hand of a person can be cut for an amount of a fourth of dinar or more. Shāfi'ī says: We follow this *Ḥadīth* (not the one quoted by Abū Ḥanīfah).

Similarly, on the question of *diyat* (blood money) of a Muslim freeman and that of a Jew, a Christian and a Magian, Shāfi'ī not only rejects the *Ḥadīth* brought forward by the 'Irāqī school in support of their stand but uses *qiyās* to uphold his thesis and it is only as a secondary argument that he brings forward another *Ḥadīth* in his support. Abū Ḥanīfah held that the *diyat* (blood-money) of a Jew, a Christian and a Magian is the same as that of a Muslim freeman so that if a Muslim kills one of the Ahl-al-Zimmah, he is liable to *Qiṣāṣ*. According to *kitab-al-Umm*, "traditions stating that the Prophet fixed equal *diyat* for a Muslim and a non-Muslim are numerous. And this has been reported by a person of great understanding and one who was best conversant with the traditions of the Prophet, namely, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī who reported that the *diyat* of a *Mu'ahid* (one with whom the Muslims had an agreement) in the time of Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān was equal to the *diyat* of a Muslim, until Mu'āwīyah made it half the *diyat* of a Muslim freed man." The Medinese, in common with Shāfi'i, did not accept these reports but adhered to the existing practice. But while the Medinese do not argue in favour of their stand or bring a counter-*Ḥadīth*, Shāfi'ī argues in support of his standpoint (that a Muslim cannot be killed for a non-Muslim and that the *diyat* of a Jew and a Christian is one-third of that of a Muslim) by saying that if a non-Muslim joins a war against the non-Muslims, we give a share of the booty to the Muslims but not to the non-Muslims. So the *Sunnah* has differentiated between a Muslim and a non-Muslim in respect of the share of the booty. Similarly, we take from the Muslims a share of what they own, i.e. we collect zakāt from the Muslims and this purifies them. But when we take something from a non-Muslim (jizyah) we do so to belittle him in his own eyes as the Qur'ān says, "until they pay jizyah by their

hands and look belittled" (IV-28). Thus we find that God and His Prophet have placed the non-Muslims in the position of slaves. Shāfi'ī goes on to quote[47] a *Ḥadīth* that the Prophet in his address in the "year of victory" said, "no Muslim should be killed for a non-Muslim". This *Ḥadīth*, Shāfi'ī says, is more authoritative. Not content with quoting a *Ḥadīth* in his favour, Shāfi'ī further seeks to strengthen his position by quoting a report from 'Uyanah who said, "I asked 'Alī: is there anything from the Prophet other than the Qur'ān"? He said, "No! except that God gives a person understanding of the Qur'ān and of what is there in the Ṣahīfah." I asked, "What is there in the Ṣahīfah"? He said, "The payment of *diyat*, the freeing of the prisoner and that a Muslim should not be killed for a non-Muslim."

This shows that while Shāfi'ī upholds against the *Ijmā'*, the practice and the *Rāy* of the scholars, he is not able to set up objective standards for the interpretation and application of *Ḥadīth*, so that *Ḥadīth* reopens the door of the differences which Shāfi'ī sought to close. He himself accepts only those *Ḥadīth* which *he* regards as authoritative, while he rejects *Ḥadīths* employed by other schools of law.

As we have shown above, Shāfi'ī reacted strongly against the *Rāy-Ijmā'* process of the ancient schools of law. Therefore, he seeks to demolish their conception of *Ijmā'* (which admitted differences of opinion), so as to pave the way for large-scale introduction of *Ḥadīth* in Islamic legislation. He points to the differences betwen these schools and the differences *within* these schools. There are, he says,[48] people in Mecca who cannot oppose 'Atā b. Abī Rabaḥ and there are those who prefer to go against him. Similarly, some people in Medinah think that al-Zanjī b. Khālid occupies a very eminent position in jurisprudence, while some incline to Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab.

Each of the two parties tries to belittle the other and exceeds the limits of moderation. The Medinese generally accord a high position to Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab, but still refuse to follow some of his opinions. In our own time Mālik has assumed greater prominence. But Ibn Abī al-Zanad goes to the extremes in disparaging him. In Kufah, Shāfi‘ī adds, we see people who incline towards Ibn-Abī Layla and condemn Abū Yūsuf, while others prefer to follow the opinions of Abū Yūsuf and condemn Ibn Abī-Layla. Some in Kufa follow the opinions of Al-Thaurī and some the opinions of al-Ḥasan b. Ṣāliḥ.

From these examples, Shāfi‘ī concludes that there is no true *Iijmā‘* in the schools. Otherwise how could there be such acute differences of opinion. But Shāfi‘ī concedes that there is *Ijmā‘* of another kind, namely, that which relates to duties (Faraidh). Speaking to an opponent who asks him whether we should abandon the concept of *Ijmā‘* altogether, Shāfi‘ī says, "Yes, there is an *Ijmā‘* relating to the duties (of a Muslim) of which no man should be ignorant. If I say: all the people agree on it, you will not find a single man who knows anything (about religion) saying that this is not an *Ijmā‘*." Shafi‘i goes on to point out to the opponent that the *Ijmā‘* claimed by the school is not free from differences. In Medinah itself, there has been disagreement in every age on matters on which an *Ijmā‘* has been claimed. "There cannot be any *Ijmā‘*, Shāfi‘ī adds, except of the kind referred to by me, namely, that about which there is no difference of opinion. Perhaps the *Ijmā‘* you speak of is nothing more than majority opinion, even if a minority disagrees. But this should not be called an *Ijmā‘*. It is only majority opinion."

It is clear from this that Shāfi‘ī's conception of *Ijmā‘* is that of total agreement or unanimity of opinion, whereas the ancient schools claimed *Ijmā‘* on the basis, sometimes

of majority opinion, and sometimes even on the basis of minority opinion, if that minority was well-respected and considered authoritative by the community in general. In fact the *Ijmā'* conception of the ancient schools was not a statistical concept. It had nothing to do with numbers. If a few leading jurists agreed on an opinion, that opinion was considered to be an agreed opinion (*Ijmā'*). Shāfi'ī would not accept this freely flowing *Ijmā'*, which was informal. He therefore denied that there ever could be an *Ijmā'* of the learned, and insisted on the *Ijmā'-'Amma* or the *Ijmā'* of the community as a whole. Naturally, such *Ijmā'* was restricted to the essentials of religion, on which there was total agreement.

In spite of his rejection of the *Ijmā' al-khassah* (the *Ijmā'* of the learned), Shāfi'ī could not completely rid himself of the concept and occasionally he is prepared to concede that the consensus of the learned is decisive in matters where there is likely to be a sharp clash of opinions. For example, he says:—60

اذا لم تكن سنة و كان القرآن محتملا فوجدنا قول اصحاب
النبى صلى الله عليه و سلم و اجماع اهل العلم يدل على بعض
المعانى دون بعض قلنا هم اعلم لكتاب الله عزوجل و قولهم غير
مخالف ان شاء الله تعالى لكتاب الله.

"If there be no *Sunnah* and the Qur'ān admits of many possible interpretations, we find that the opinion of the Companions of the Prophet and the consensus of the scholars leads to some interpretation as against others. In such cases, we hold that they have a better understanding of the Book of God and their opinions, if God so wills, will not go against the Book of God."

We thus find that in the last sentence of the above passage, Shāfi'ī concedes that the opinion of Companions and the *Ijmā'* of the learned people in respect of their interpretation of the Qur'ān is practically infallible. It is not quite clear why he is not prepared to extend this

principle to *Ḥadīth* for *Ḥadīth* is liable to as many differing interpretations as the Qur'ān.

Recapitulation

We have seen that the Qur'ān did not set forth detailed laws for all possible situations. After legislating on a few basic social questions, the Qur'ān left it to the Prophet and, after him, to the Muslim Community in general to devise fresh laws for new situations as and when these arose. The Prophet himself refrained from giving detailed laws for every possible situation. Although he set a pattern (*Sunnah*) for the Muslims to follow, his own specific decisions on socio-economic matters did not cover the whole field of legislation and much was still left at the discretion of the Muslim community and its leaders and scholars. It was in the time of 'Umar that the need arose for new legislation owing to the social changes brought about by the Muslim conquests. 'Umar followed the Prophet's *Sunnah* without always adhering to the specific decisions of the Prophet. That is why he was very circumspect in accepting *Ḥadīth*, for large scale narration of *Hadith* would have severely circumscribed the freedom of the Muslim community. After 'Umar, the next two Caliphs did not do much in the sphere of legislation and it was only in the Umayyad times that the need for fresh legislation was felt. The Umayyad Qāzīs, therefore, decided matters according to their own individual judgement. But their decisions were not necessarily accepted as precedents by the future generations, because they had neither the requisite scholarship, nor did they have sufficient acquaintance with the prophetic *Sunnah*. The representatives of the prophetic *Sunnah* were the Companions of the Prophet and only those people who enjoyed their constant company were looked upon as having authority to legislate. Therefore, we find that the ancient schools

of law were founded by people who were directly connected with the Successors of the Companions or the Successors of the Successors.

The ancient schools of law adhered to the existing practice of their respective regions. There were many elements which went to the shaping of this regional practice. There was the *Sunnah* of the Prophet which had come down to the ancient schools through the Companions of the prophet and their Successors and the Successors of the Successors. In the interpretation and application of the *Sunnah*, the consensus of the regional scholars played a leading part. This consensus was achieved through individual *Rāy* or *Ijtihād*. *Ḥadīth* was not rejected, but it was not literally applied. Where the situation demanded a departure from *Ḥadīth*, the jurists did not hesitate to do so. Thus the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and the consensus of scholars, achieved through *Rāy* or *Ijtihād*, shaped legislation in early Islamic times. With the advent of Shāfi'ī and his insistence on the literal application of *Ḥadīth*, this methodology lost much of its vogue and effectiveness, and the freedom of the jurists was severely circumscribed. Shāfi'ī demanded total agreement instead of *Ijmā'* which lived on differences. His advocacy of *Ḥadīth* gave a new orientation to the Prophetic *Sunnah*, because this *Sunnah* could now be ascertained only through the *Ḥadīth*. *Rāy* and *Ijtihād* were rejected by Shāfi'ī. In his opinion *Qiyās* was the only form of *Ijtihād*, and *Qiyās* could be applied, according to Shāfi'ī only if there was a specific mention of the *'Illah* (the reason) in the Qur'ān. The main motive of Shāfi'ī in his criticism of the *Sunnah-Ijmā'* and *Rāy* (or *Ijtihād*)—system built up by the ancient schools of law—was to reduce the differences between the schools of law and introduce uniformity of legislation. Further, he desired to be more objective and concrete in matters of legislation. The introduction or *Ḥadīth* on a large scale

in the legislative process, he thought, would not only bring about uniformity of opinion, and reduce chances of differences, but would also create an objective standard for deciding questions under dispute in place of the subjective *Rāy* or *Ijtihād* of individual scholars.

It will be seen from the above analysis that the closing of the gate of *Ijtihād* inevitably followed the practice of ascertaining the Sunnah from *Ḥadīth*. The early schools of law did not insist on the literal application of *Ḥadīth*. They exercised their right of interpreting *Ḥadīth* and applying it in the light of the existing conditions. But when *Ḥadīth* began to be literally applied, irrespective of social conditions, the sphere of *Ijtihād* was severely circumscribed.

This fact has not been given due importance by Iqbāl who says that the door of *Ijtihād* was closed because the legists misunderstood the motives Muslim rationalism and reacted against the unrestrained thought of particular rationalists. Iqbāl also says that the rise and growth of ascetic Sufism which gradually developed under influences of a non-Islamic character a purely speculative side was also responsible for this attitude of the jurists. Finally, he points out that the destruction of Baghdad, which was the centre of Muslim intellectual life impelled the Muslim scholars to arrest the process of disintegration in Muslim society. Naturally, therefore, they looked with suspicion on all free thought, whether in the realm of jurisprudence or theology. While we would not deny that these factors were partly responsible for the closing of the door of *Ijtihād*, we would maintain that the greatest single factor which stopped *Ijtihād* activity was the practice of the literal application of *Ḥadīth* and the ascertainment of Sunnah by means of *Ḥadīth*. This put an end to the *Rāy-Ijtihād-Ijmā'* process and from then onwards *Ijmā'* and *Ijtihād* were bifurcated.

NOTES

1. Iqbāl: The *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1962, p. 147.
2. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 173.
3. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 174.
4. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 176.
5. Iqbāl: Ibid., p. 165.
6. Coulson N.J.: A *History of Islamic Law*, Edinburgh, 1964, p. 11.
7. Shiblī No'mānī: *Al-Fārūq* (Urdu), Azamgadh, 1376 A.H., Vol. II, p. 157.
8. Ibn Qutaibah: *Tāwīl Mukhtalif-al-Aḥādith*, Cairo, 1326 A.H., pp. 48, 49.
9. Coulson N. J.: op. cit., p. 32.
10. Ibn-al-Qayyim: *Al-'Ilām-al-Muwaqqī'n*, Delhi, 1313 A.H., p. 28.
11. Saifuddin Abī al-Ḥusain 'Alī b. Abī 'Alī Moḥammad al-Amidī *Al-Aḥkām Fī Uṣūl-al-Aḥkām*, Vol. I, Cairo, 1332 A.H., Vol. I, pp. 347, 48.
12. Coulson, N.J.: op. cit., p. 37.
13. Coulson, N.J.: op. cit., p. 37.
14. *Muwaṭṭā'*, Cairo, 1370 A.H. Vol. II, p. 583.
15. *Al-Mudawwanat-al-Kubrā'*, Cairo, 1323 A.H., Vol. V, p. 23.
16. *Al-Mudawwanat-al-Kubrā'*: Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 22, 23.
17. *Al-Muwattā'* op. cit., Vol. II, p. 525.
18. *Al-Mudawwanāt al-Kubrā'*: op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 5.
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Chapter VI

ISLAMIC LEGISLATION IN THE MODERN WORLD

We have seen that Shāfi'ī aimed at introducing uniformity in Muslim legislation and building up a system of law which would be free from regional diversities. He also stood out against the use of subjective *Rā'y* or *Ijtihād*. For this purpose he advocated large-scale use of *Ḥadīth*, which he thought, would provide a universal standard of juristic judgement and thus eliminate regional differences. *Ḥadīth* could not be given a regional character, for the Prophet belonged to all Muslims, irrespective of time and place. Whatever he did or said had, therefore, universal validity, whereas the validity of the judgements given by the regional scholars lacked this universal element. Moreover, *Ḥadīth* could not be pressed in the service of subjective judgements, depending on the opinion of individual scholars. In this way greater objectivity would be introduced in Islamic legislation. Shāfi'ī's rejection of *Ijmā'* and forms of *Ijtihād* other than Qiyās (for example, *Istiḥsān* and *Istiṣlāḥ*) was motivated by the same desire. In place of individual opinion not restricted by a uniform system of rules and regulations, Shāfi'ī wanted disciplined judgement based on clear-cut principles.

Shāfi'ī's attempts met with a measure of success. No new schools of law arose after Shāfi'ī. Thus the danger that the area of juristic differences would go on widening with the passage of time was averted. But for Shāfi'ī, we would

have had too many schools of law with little common ground between them. Again, it was due to Shāfi'ī's writings that *Rā'y*, *Istiḥsān* and *Istiṣlāh* were discredited and emphasis shifted on disciplined judgement in juristic matters. But Shāfi'ī's insistence on *Ḥadīth* as a major source of Islamic law resulted in the *Ḥadīth* movement, which had very little effect on Islamic law itself, for the collection and codification of *Ḥadīth* became an independent activity without any relation to the development of Islamic jurisprudence. As far as the field of jurisprudence was concerned, the activity of the collectors and narrators of *Ḥadīth* seemed to have little effect, because the schools of law which had been formed before this activity started were not shaken from their position. On the contrary, each school began justifying its position on points of detail with the support of "Ḥadīth" although the collectors of *Ḥadīth* mainly avoided such *Ḥadīth*. It is true that some of the ancient schools fell into oblivion and disappeared with the passage of time, but this was not the result of the *Ḥadīth* movement. The major schools of Irāq and Medina suffered no unpopularity and their expansion continued despite the massive *Ḥadīth* movement. Only a new school, that of Ibn Ḥanbal's, arose mainly on the basis of *Ḥadīth*. Shāfi'ī's own system of jurisprudence did not receive universal recognition, despite the reliance it placed on *Ḥadīth*. It became one of the major regional systems of jurisprudence which were in vogue in the Islamic world.

Ḥadīth itself, as we observed in the previous chapter, failed to eliminate subjectivism from juristic thought, for one could find in the rich *Ḥadīth* literature material for any standpoint one wished to maintain, because this literature was the result of a long historical evolution in the formation of which people of different viewpoints had taken part. It was, moreover, always possible to inter-

pret *Ḥadīth* in one's own way or explain it away. Therefore, the massive *Ḥadīth* movement did not succeed in narrowing down the area of differences among the various juristic school. Each school adhered to the *Ḥadīth* which it had received from its founders or *Shuyūkh* (teachers).

The differences between the schools of law, which were ascribed by Shāfi'ī to the use of arbitrary *Rā'y* and insufficient attention to *Ḥadīth*, were partly due to other factors. These factors continued to operate even after Shāfi'ī had succeeded in evolving a set of clear-cut juristic principles. Firstly, there was the lack of inter-regional communications due to geographical difficulties. The scholars of the various regions rarely met each other and possessed no forum for the mutual discussions of their problems. If they had possessed such a forum, they might have been able to iron out their differences. When, at last, the *Ḥadīth* movement impelled individual scholars to undertake long journeys in search of knowledge, their activities remained confined to the reporting and hearing of *Ḥadīth*. We find no mention of journeys undertaken for the purpose of mutually discussing the legal issues that divided the scholars of one region from those of others. Another factor which militated against the creation of a uniform system of jurisprudence was the respect which the scholars of each region had for their own founders and *Shuyūkh* (teachers), and also the respect which they developed for other schools. Very rarely did it happen that the scholar of one region changed his opinion after learning of the arguments of the other scholars of a different regional school. In his *Radd 'ala Siyar-al-Auzā'ī*, Imām Abū Yūsuf uniformly upholds the opinions of Imām Abū Ḥanifiah; only in the case of the permissibility of Ribā' in Darul Ḥarb and one or two other cases, he sides with Auzā'ī. This was, to a certain extent, natural and may happen even today.

There was also the important factor of *'urf* or local custom to which several schools gave weight in jurisprudence. Ḥanafīs called it *'urf*, others, like Mālik, also brought it under "practice" or *Sunnah*.

But the most vital factor operating in favour of the maintenance of inter-regional differences was the lack of a proper machinery for ascertaining the *Ijmā'* of the scholars, and creating conditions favourable to a more broad-based agreement among the scholars of the different regions. Perhaps if such a machinery had been evolved, *Ijmā'* would have been formalised. However, without such a machinery, *Ijmā'* of the regional scholars was exposed to the objections advanced by Shāfi'ī. In the modern world with its rapid means of communication, such a machinery for the ascertainment and evolution of *Ijmā'* can be more effectively set up. Associations of 'Ulemā' can be formed in every country and these associations may send their representatives to annual conferences, where juristic problems can be discussed, and each school of thought may set forth its arguments, so that a common opinion may emerge out of mutual discussions. Even if such assemblies and meetings of the 'Ulemā' fail to arrive at a common measure of agreement, they will succeed at least in arousing public interest in the issues under discussion and enlighten public opinion, thus encouraging further discussion, enquiry and research, which may lead to *Ijmā'* at some future date. Moreover, since the conferences of the 'Ulemā' held for this purpose will have no official backing, there is no danger of the formalisation of *Ijmā'*.

Meanwhile, since the Muslim states in modern times cannot wait for the slow process of the crystallization of *Ijmā'* and must undertake legislation for their immediate needs, it will be necessary for them to hear the viewpoint of the 'Ulemā' and other experts on Islamic law. For

this purpose, proper representation will have to be given to the 'Ulemā' and other legal experts in the legislative assemblies. This presupposes a democratic structure of government in which the people's representatives will frame their own laws. The entire state legislation will be based on the *Ijmā'* or consensus of the people's representatives. Since the 'Ulemā' and Islamic legal experts will be given special representation, if necessary, by means of nomination, they will guide the people's representatives in the task of legislation and see to it that no law is passed which does not conform to Islamic norms and standards. This does not mean that the 'Ulemā' and the legal experts will have veto over legislation. But their voice in matters of legislation will be more effective, and when at last the legislative assembly does achieve a consensus with or without the support of the 'Ulema' and the legal experts represented in it, that consensus will be of a tentative nature. Any law passed by the Muslim legislative assemblies, will be enforced only for a specified period after which it will be reviewed in the light of the changes in public opinion. Every member of the legislative assembly will be entitled to call for such a review and revision.

It will be seen that the effective functioning of *Ijmā'* involves many factors, such as a democratic system of government, wide literacy, increased interest in public affairs which can come into being only when most people are well-educated and, above all, a proper system of education in which the religious needs and interests of the people are given due weight. But all this would require drastic changes in our economic life, for universal literacy, widespread education and the creation of a religiously conscious community will be possible only if wealth is more widely diffused and economic opportunities are open to a large majority of people.

If Islam is not merely a set of beliefs and forms of worship, but covers the entire range of human life with its many-sidedness, its effective functioning in modern times is impossible without a good political system based on democratic values and a healthy and balanced economic structure supported by an enlightened system of education, which takes into account the higher spiritual needs of humanity. This is what Iqbāl stood for and this is what every right-minded Muslim should desire.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

In his first lecture in "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam", Iqbāl complains that the study of Greek philosophy by the Muslim thinkers obscured their vision of the Qur'ān. "Socrates concentrated his attention on the human world alone", writes Iqbāl. "To him the proper study of man was man and not the world of plants, insects and stars. How unlike the spirit of the Qur'ān, which sees in the humble bee a recipient of Divine inspiration and constantly calls upon the reader to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alternation of day and night, the clouds, the starry heavens, and the planets swimming through infinite space!"[1] Similarly, Plato despised sense-perception, while the Qur'ān attached great value to 'hearing' and 'sight'.[2] Thus the Qur'ān tried to generate the scientific outlook in man and turned his attention away from empty theological disputes about the nature of God. This should not be understood to mean that the Qur'ān was not interested in the things of the spirit. What it taught was that spirit and matter are not to be treated as mutually antithetical. The affirmation of spirit could not come by the renunciation of the external world. It is the mysterious touch of the ideal that sustains the real. "The life of the ideal", says Iqbāl, "consists, not in a total breach with the real which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life into painful oppositions, but in the perpetual en-

deavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it, to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being."[3]

Islam, therefore, faces the realities of the present life, whether in the field of matter or of human social organisation with a view to transcending them. The study of matter enables us to control the material forces. When these material forces are pressed into the service of human ideals, they have the effect of transforming human psychology and social organisation. For example, the industrial revolution in England which effected such a rapid social transformation, was the result of the power gained through the use of machinery and the knowledge of the mechanical processes. However, it is a fact that in the industrial revolution mechanical power was not applied in the service of human ideals. The changes effected by the industrial revolution were not regulated in the wider interests of humanity. They followed automatically from the application of mechanised energy. But Islam believes in meliorism. According to Iqbāl,[4] it recognises a growing universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil. Therefore, it seeks not merely to control the forces of nature which man worshipped in the earlier periods of history but also to control the forces which govern society, for the victory over evil, to which Iqbāl has referred, cannot be gained, by mastering the world of nature alone. He who seeks to fight against the evil in human nature, must also be prepared to effect the necessary changes in the social organisation of man. This means that society should not be allowed to drift along the course of events as they arise. Rather, the events themselves should come under man's control. He should fully master his destiny in the social sphere. As Iqbāl says,[5] "It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and to shape his own

destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting the whole of energy to mould its forces to his own ends and purposes. And in this process of progressive change, God becomes a co-worker with him, provided man takes the initiative."

Briefly then, these are the three tasks to which man should address himself, if he is to live Islamically. Firstly, he should control the material forces of the universe: secondly, he should control the social forces, instead of being pushed on by them blindly; and thirdly, he should control his individual self. If he undertakes these tasks in the service of higher ideals, the Qur'ān assures him that he will be participating in the divine scheme of things and would receive God's help.

"O ye who believe: If ye help (in the cause of) Allah, He will help you". (XLVII-7)

It is a mistaken idea that Islam merely taught mankind to observe nature, which had been made subservient to his needs. The Qur'ān, no doubt, insists again and again that all the objects of nature, including such things as the animals, the birds and the air have been placed under man's control, and he can make use of them for his own ends. What is often forgotten is that Islam also taught man to control his social organisation. In a world which was exclusively interested in the supersensible realm and had no idea of moulding man's earthy destiny, this was not an ordinary achievement. But the Qur'ān legislated and the Prophet legislated to lay down the foundations of a good social order in which man could live with dignity according to his own conscience. The legal systems built up by the early Muslim jurists have been widely recognised as the signal contribution of Islam to the human civilization. But it is not realized that the legal system was only a part of the total Islamic effort to gain control of the forces which move and change

the human society. Unfortunately, we are giving more importance to the legal system than it deserves and are in danger of forgetting the question of economic justice which is a matter of decisive importance for our survival as a nation.

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